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Church Bells:

THEIR USES, THEIR ROMANCE, AND THEIR HISTORY.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

I HAVE been asked to allow these articles on "Church Bells" to be reprinted in book form. If, as I am told, some kindly readers think they will bear republication, I may doubt, but cannot object. Illness prevents me from revising them. They must therefore go to the press in this new form, with all their imperfections on their head.

For the division into chapters, their arrangement and titles, with the preparation of a copious, serviceable Index, I have gratefully to acknowledge the judicious work of a Friend.

THE AUTHOR.

March 31st, 1903.

I.—THE USES, SHAPE, AND SIZE OF BELLS.

HOW often they have been sung by poets! How inspiring to remember that for over fourteen hundred centuries they have been noted in Church history! What numberless generations of British folk have they called to worship! To what myriads have they rung for joy, or tolled for death! When all people in these isles were of one faith, their notes summoned all, and appealed to all, whether they might be merry or should grieve. I do not believe that this sentiment is much less general even now. Our church bells still speak to all alike, though not perhaps in the same degree. As we listen few of us can help feeling:—

> Oh, what a preacher is the time-worn tower,
> Reading great sermons with its iron tongue.

As the air resounds with the notes so struck, people of all religions are reminded of the duty of public devotion, though they no longer perform it under the same roof. The bells celebrate Royal anniversaries and great occasions, local and national, and do so as voices of the whole community. They have sounded the alarm, happily not often in our land, during war and tumult. To them we owe two of the most striking features in church architecture, tower and steeple, chief ornaments in the distant view of either city or village. Yet, apart from the knowledge that there they hang, and discourse at human bidding for the generations that have passed and those that shall come, how little most of us know about them! Will you spare a little time to listen to their story, told by no expert, but gathered from many sources not easily accessible? The subject is fascinating, and for at least 300 years has been treated by many writers. It will interest many of my readers to be reminded that, so long ago as 1848, a valuable contribution was made to this literature by the late Rev. Alfred Gatty, in a work noticed in the "Quarterly Review," and entitled "The Bell: its Origin, History, and Uses." The book, which passed into a second edition, was written about nine years after the author came to Ecclesfield, where he spent, in the title of another volume from his pen, "A Life at One Living."

Now I know, at starting, that bells are not always welcome. Southey, who liked them well, takes, I think, rather low ground when, in his "Doctor," he claims for the art of bell-ringing that it is at least the most harmless way of making a noise in the world. It must be confessed that this view is not of universal acceptance. In the distance, soft, sweet notes from an harmonious peal please the ear and touch the heart. To some people with nerves, living under the very shadow of their church, the sonorous clangour just above them is distracting. This feeling is not confined to our own land. Here is a French denunciation, almost rising to an imprecation:—

> Persécuteurs du genre humain,
> Qui sonnez sans miséricorde,
> Que n'avez-vous au cou la corde
> Que vous tenez en vos mains?

which I have ventured to English thus, though the double play upon "corde" is beyond reach in our tongue:—

> Ye ringers who, in deafening bands,
> No pity have for age or sex,
> Would that the ropes, pulled by your hands,
> Were fastened round your cursed necks!

Here, as in matters affecting the body politic generally, the greatest happiness of the greatest number must be our guide. An old author who wrote nearly 300 years ago proves at great length, to his own satisfaction, that the principal employment of the blessed in Heaven will be the continual ringing of bells. Objections to the monotony as well as the din of this employment carried no weight with this enthusiast. People who think bells a nuisance should have lived twelve centuries ago, when they were small and harmless. Those of gold, mentioned in Exodus, were attached to the priest's vestment. No such use of them was made in Christian worship. Within the sacred precincts they were at first probably rung by hand. Then they were placed outside and aloft as a call to prayers, and gradually increased in elevation and in size. Mohammedans, as we know, rejected bells because of their use by Christians, and have high up outside their mosques criers who with loud voices call the people to prayer. Within the Ottoman dominions, indeed, up to a recent period, the use of bells was forbidden; they reminded faithful followers of the prophet too obviously of a rival creed. Among Christians, bells had to grow in size

and volume before they could be heard any distance. In the early churches one was used in the choir; one to mark the elevation of the Host; one was for the cloister; another for the refectory; another, much less welcome, we may be sure, to wake the monks in their dormitory; still less welcome was that which announced scourging time. The date of their first employment for ecclesiastical purposes is uncertain. Legend gives the credit to a certain Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, a town of Campania, in Italy. Hence the compound word "campanology," meaning any treatise relating to bell-founding or bell-ringing, and "campanile," a bell-tower detached from the church, like that at Cremona, 395 feet high, or that which Giotto made, one of the glories of Florence, or the new one now being built close to the new Cathedral at Westminster. It is a curious origin for two words now current with us.

When church bells were first brought into England is doubtful. Benedict, abbot of Wearmouth, in the seventh century, is said to have imported them from Italy; and one at Whitby is mentioned in the same century by the Venerable Bede as used by the nuns of St. Hilda's sisterhood. Croyland Abbey had then seven bells of "exquisite harmony." Judged by an illumination in a devotional service book of the period, they were small, and hung either in an open campanile or on the roof, while a monk struck each in turn with a hammer or mallet. King Canute gave two bells to Winchester Cathedral in 1035, and two in the same century were given to Beverley Minster by the Archbishop of York. Ireland and Scotland appear to have been before us. At Belfast is preserved the bell of St. Patrick, said to be mentioned in Ulster annals, A.D. 552, though bearing the dates 1091 and 1105. It is adorned with gems and with gold and silver filagree work, and being only six inches high could have annoyed nobody. The oldest bells were not of their present shape. Some were long and narrow waisted; some quadrangular, made of iron plates hammered and riveted together; others were mitre-shaped; metal bars served occasionally, as for cheapness they do now. All romance seems destroyed by this last shape. Ages before they were known in Europe, bells were common in China, India, and Burmah for religious purposes, and the existing shape here may have been copied from Eastern models. Many examples have been brought to England, captured during our frequent wars in these countries.

Bell-founding in its early periods is supposed to have been carried on by ecclesiastics, or under their direction. Curious accounts are extant showing that parishioners met the cost, not only by subscribing money, but by giving kitchen utensils of copper or brass, tin or lead, such as pots, platters, basins, lavers, kettles, mortars, trivets, and mill pots. This is from an actual list of such contributions in the reign of Edward I. Tin, of course, entered largely into the composition. York and Nottingham were noted for early bell-founding. Temporary furnaces were also set up in centres around which work was secured. Soon the baby bells first made grew in size, as better mechanical appliances were employed by founders, and the method of tuning them aright was learned. Change-ringing was unknown in pre-Reformation times. Founders, therefore, says North, "strove then to produce grandeur and dignity rather than musical sequence." Two, three, or sometimes four bells were the general church equipment. Ely Cathedral, in the reign of Edward III., besides smaller bells, had four, varying in weight from 18 to 38 cwt. Bury St. Edmunds, at the dissolution of the monasteries, had two of seven and nine tons. Ecclesiastics, too, vied with each other in hanging the heaviest bells, which should produce the greatest volume of sound, and in fixing them at such a height as would make them heard at the greatest distance. It is astonishing that in mediæval times they could overcome the difficulties of founding these masses of metal, of making each strike the true note desired, and then of transporting this huge weight and bulk, lifting each bell to the height of tower or steeple, and fixing it securely there with its fellows in the belfry, where, enormous as their united weight might be, they should swing and vibrate without endangering the structure.

Failures through this great vibration there often must have been. Such have occurred even in recent times, as in 1810, when the spire of St. Nicholas' Church at Liverpool fell as the bells were being rung for morning service, and killed twenty-three of the congregation. Of another sort was the failure of the great Czar bell in the Kremlin at Moscow, cast in 1773, and weighing nearly 200 tons. It cracked in the furnace, the broken part weighing eleven tons. This monster, now placed on a platform, is 19 feet high and 60 feet in circumference. Russia was not to be beaten by this failure, and a second bell was successfully produced, weighing according to some accounts 80, while others make it 128 tons, the largest in the world. It is only heard three times a year, when it is said to sound through the city like distant thunder. Even this does not represent its full force, because as the Russian bells are fixed fast to their beams they do not gain in volume by swinging; they are merely struck by the movement to and fro of the clapper. Pekin stands next to Moscow with a bell of 53 tons; then Cologne, 25 tons. In England the biggest is Great Paul in the Metropolitan Cathedral, 17 tons, cast in 1881. It cost £3,000, and is said to exceed the big bell at Notre Dame by half a ton. Then comes Great Peter in York Minster, dated 1845, with a reputed weight of 12½ tons, deposed from its former sovereignty in England by Great Paul; Great Tom at Oxford, seven

tons; and his namesake at Lincoln, five tons. These attempts to outvie, or rather out-weigh, bells in other churches have surely been carried far enough. Sweetness of tone is as important as volume of sound, though those who have heard the deep, full, long-vibrating notes of Great Paul, rung on solemn occasions like that of good Queen Victoria's death, carry away an impression hard to be effaced.

Machinery has been invented for chiming and carillon-playing. Ringing, however, is a different art. Mr. Ellacombe, who was a great authority in his time, believed that science will never produce machinery by which a peal of bells can be "raised, rung, changed, and ceased," which are the technical terms applicable to change-ringing. "Ringing," he says, "always implies that bells are swung; and it is only by swinging that the grand, full tone of a bell can be brought out." Elsewhere he explains what is meant by "ringing a peal." This is understood to be a performance by the ringers of the full number of changes of which their bells are capable. Suppose, for example, there are three bells. They can be rung with six alterations:—1, 2, 3; 1, 3, 2; 2, 1, 3; 2, 3, 1; 3, 1, 2; 3, 2, 1. The rapid increase of possible changes in proportion to the number of bells is astonishing. Thus four bells produce 24 permutations; five produce five times as many as four; six, six times as many as five; and so on, in the same order of progression, until some ingenious calculator has shown that it would take 91 years to ring all the changes of which twelve bells are capable, at the rate of two strokes a second; while the changes upon 24 bells would similarly occupy more than 117 billions of years! Among scientific ringers 5,000 changes constitute a peal. Any lower number is variously termed a short or a long "touch," "a piece of ringing," or "a flourish of the bells."

It will be seen then, that the art of change-ringing upon a peal of five, six, or eight bells, or even less, is not so simple and easy as it is supposed to be. Every ringer must know his place and keep to it with judgment and precision, or he spoils the performance, and disorganises the whole fraternity.

II.—THE FOUNDING AND DEDICATION OF BELLS.

FROM three to four parts of copper to one of tin appears to be about the usual proportion of metal used in casting. Monastic bell-founders thought that silver improved the sound. This may be inferred because, when Charlemagne admired the tone of a bell produced in the Abbey of St. Gall, the monk-founder, enthusiast in his art as he was, at once said:—"My Lord Emperor, command a great quantity of copper to be brought to me, which I will purify by fire, and let me have silver instead of tin, about a hundred pounds, and I will cast for you such a bell that the others in comparison with it shall be mute." Of several bells there are stories of much silver, in coins and other forms, thrown in by pious contributors. At the casting of Great Tom of Lincoln in 1610, silver tankards and other articles of the same precious metal are said to have been thus given; but an analysis at Tom's recasting in 1831 showed a very insignificant proportion of silver. In his work of 1848, already quoted, Dr. Gatty says it is a mistake to suppose that silver sweetens the sound. On the contrary, "if introduced in any large quantity, it would injure the sound, being in its nature more like lead as compared with copper, and therefore incapable of producing the hard, brittle, dense and vibratory amalgam called bell-metal. There are, no question, various little ingredients which the skilful founder employs to improve his composition; but those are the secrets of the craft and peculiar to every separate foundry."

In one Yorkshire parish, Liversedge, war furnished the chief constituents, for the bells were made of guns captured by Lord William Bentinck at Genoa in 1814. On the other hand, during the Civil War, the Puritans are credited with the casting of many cannon out of church bells. Not many names of our earliest English founders are preserved, though in York Minster the well-known bell-founder's window in the nave records the art of Richard Tunnoc, and shows him engaged at the furnace and some of his other processes. He must have been a master of his craft, and a man of substance, for in 1327 he repre-

sented the city in Parliament. Considering the many difficulties with which these ancient metallurgists had to struggle, they had a clear title to fame.

In somewhat later times we find more distinct traces of founders at Boston, Peterborough, Stamford, Nottingham, and Lincoln. Nottingham sent many bells into the neighbouring counties. The Quarrbys, Oldfields, Mellors, and Hedderleys were famous in their day. The Quarrby stamp (Rose and Shield) is on bells at Caistor, Killingholme, Haxey, and other Lincolnshire parishes, and is coupled in that last-mentioned with a rude representation of the Virgin and Child. Humphrey Wilkinson of Lincoln cast a bell for Kirton-in-Lindsey, and in 1689 also cast a new "Cutlers' Bell," by order of Robert Breilsforth, then Master of the Cutlers' Company of Sheffield. Wath-upon-Dearne, in 1774-1800, had also bell-founders, the Hiltons, who made four bells for Massingham. Perhaps the most noted Lincolnshire bell-founder was John Harrison, son of the parish clerk of Barrow-on-Humber, where his factory was situated. He and his brother James invented an instrument which gained them the Government reward of £20,000 for determining the longitude at sea. John Harrison died in 1766, but his business was continued by his sons at Barrow and Barton. He cast the six bells of Epworth upon a new principle of his own, making them very wide and thin at the mouth; but competent judges, says North, think them far inferior to the six bells at Haxey, cast on the old plan.

At Chesterfield the Heathcotes were a noted family of bell-founders Ralph, the first in this business, died in 1525. He made several bells for Matlock and other Derbyshire as well as Lincolnshire churches. There is a curious founder's stamp borne by bells at West Barkwith, Bishop's Norton, and two other parishes, which the late Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt, in his incomplete work on the church bells of Derbyshire, thinks may be assigned to the Heathcotes. The distinctive feature of this stamp is a cross known as the "fylfot," or "cross cramponce," which was used as a symbol by the Buddhists 600 years before Christ, and afterwards in Scandinavia represented the hammer of Thor.

Sheffield, contrary to one's expectation from its eminence in metallurgy, does not seem to have possessed any early bell-founders. Messrs. Naylor, Vickers, and Co., with their cast-steel bells, belong naturally to quite a modern school in the art. At Rotherham, Joseph Ludlam, about 1733-59, took to this business outside his usual line of ironmongery and bell-hanging. The only clear record of his casting is one of a bell at Thornton Curtis. He had a shop near the Grammar School.

After the founding of the bell came the benediction, in pre-Reformation times an important ceremony. Sometimes, indeed, as Southey tells us, a blessing was invoked during the casting. When cast within the precincts of a monastery, as they frequently were, "the brethren stood round the furnace, ranged in processional order, sang the 150th Psalm, and then, after certain prayers, blessed the molten metal, and called upon the Lord to infuse into it His grace, and overshadow it with His power, for the honour of the Saint to whom the bell was to be dedicated, and whose name it was to bear." When completed, and before hanging, the bell was placed in the church, and, after Psalms sung, it was washed with holy water, anointed with oil, and solemnly named. Sometimes it was censed with myrrh and frankincense, and adorned with a white satin robe and garlands of flowers. The white garment, or chrisom, is the same as in the Roman Catholic service of baptism is placed upon infants, as an emblem of innocence. Rich donors of the bell often acted as sponsors, and, at the celebrant's call, gave the name they desired for it. A cross was placed at the top; and the consecration was supposed to give the bell power to preserve all devout persons within its sounds from injury caused by lightning, hail, and tempest. Moreover, these holy rites, it was thought, would also drive away evil spirits hovering about the bell high up in its new and solitary resting-place.

In mediæval legend, the air around the summit of the church-tower was a favourite trysting-place for such evil spirits, anxious to pull down the cross or harm the bells. In Longfellow's "Golden Legend," such a scene is portrayed at Strasburg Cathedral; and a howling storm, hoarse shouts of demons, mingled with chanting from the choir below and chiming of the bells above, make up a lurid picture. Consecration armed the bells against possible assaults by these ghostly enemies. One Roman Catholic bishop at this ceremony used edifying words. "The bells," he said, "placed like sentinels on the towers, watch over us and turn away from us the temptations of the enemy of our salvation, as well as storms and tempests. They speak and pray for us in our troubles; they inform heaven of the necessities of the earth." And he called upon the congregation to join with him in prayer that "the happy and holy family of bells" just sanctified might be preserved from all accidents. There was a widespread belief in the middle ages, to which even Bacon gives some support, that the ringing of church bells purified the air during pestilence, and drove away storms. In old St. Paul's a "hallowed bell" was rung "in great tempestes or lightninges." There was "a storm bell" at Malmesbury Abbey; and we shall see ample confirmation of the popular belief in numerous bell inscriptions to be noticed later.

Similar benedictory ceremonies continued in England until the Reformation. In the churchwardens' accounts of St. Lawrence, Reading, for 1499, is a short entry which shows the practice:—"Payed for

halowing of the bell named 'Harry' six shillings and eightpence." (I have modernised the rendering of this time-honoured lawyer's and ecclesiastical fee.) "And over that, Sir William Symes, Richard Clech, and Mistress Smyth being godfaders and godmoder at the consecracyon of the same bell, and berying (bearing) all other costs to the suffragan." One writer says that when the Roman Catholic service was dispensed with in England, Protestants went into the opposite extreme, and from superstitious observances passed to indecorous conviviality. But, accompanying the ancient service just mentioned there was generally a feast and secular rejoicing; and this practice was continued in the English Reformed Church, no doubt accompanied by scenes of occasional disorder.

White of Selborne, mentions such a festival when his village church received a new peal in 1735. The treble bell was then turned bottom upwards, and filled with punch. A great-uncle of mine, who gave a bell, caused it to be filled with old, humming ale. In these cases the donors' intention was good—to make the occasion memorable and one of rejoicing; and stories of excess may be exaggerated. On the whole it is well that this "christening" of new bells no longer prevails. To the ancient and pretty adornment by flowers there can be no like objection, and this custom was revived in our own times at Blyth, near Retford, in 1842, when the new bells were not only hung with garlands, but, preceded by a brass band, were drawn to the church under a temporary arch make bright with flowers and evergreens.

A special service for the dedication of bells is cited by the Rev. Geo. S. Tyack, of Crowle, Doncaster, in his excellent "Book About Bells," published in 1898, to which I am indebted for much information. When the king of British bells was hung in St. Paul's Cathedral in 1878, there was a striking and solemn service. After evensong a procession, consisting of the choir, the cathedral clergy, and the bishop, proceeded to the ringing chamber, where several Psalms were sung, including the 150th, after which followed versicles and responses. Specially composed collects were then said by the bishop—that the bells might be "blessed to the spiritual well-being" of the people; then, recalling the silver trumpets made by divine command for summoning the Israelites to worship, asking that those who heard the bells might "joyfully obey the call to meet together in God's Holy Church"; also, supplications on behalf of those who might hear but through sickness or other cause be unable to obey this call; and for the ringers that they might be "filled with reverence and godly fear." The ceremony closed with a hymn, the collect for St. Paul's Day, and a short peal by the ringers.

Of special interest, in connection with the reference to the Israelites' silver trumpets in the above service, is a statement by the late Mr. North, in his valuable work on "The Church Bells of Lincolnshire" (1882), already mentioned. He tells us that, prior to the 5th century, "the early Christians, so soon as they were able to meet publicly without fear, used, like the Jews of old, trumpets as a summons to prayer and praise." He adds that St. Jerome is the earliest Christian writer who refers to bells, mentioning them in his rules for monks as calling to matins. They were well-known to the Anglo-Saxon Church. St. Dunstan and Lanfranc, Archbishops of Canterbury, drew up rules for ringing them; and their provision and use in churches were encouraged by royal decrees conferring a Thane's rank on any Saxon churl or franklin who possessed 500 acres of land and had built thereon a church with a church tower. After the Norman Conquest, as Mr. North points out, the Curfew law could not have been carried out, and the hour for extinguishing fires announced, had bells not then been in general use.

Last December, a bright and interesting service was used at the dedication of bells at Heanor, in Derbyshire. In the diocese of York, a special office for these dedications, sanctioned by the Archbishop, has now been published, so that, on such occasions, all things may be done decently and in order. The ceremony begins in the tower, where, after the collect, "Prevent us O Lord," the churchwardens, holding the ropes of the bells, say to the episcopal or other celebrant, "We request you to dedicate to the glory of God, and the use of this church, this peal of bells." The Bishop, receiving the ropes, is then to say, "By virtue of our sacred office, we do solemnly set apart and separate from all profane and unhallowed uses these bells, now dedicated to the glory of God, for the benefit of His Holy Church." Then, delivering the ropes to the Vicar:—"Receive these bells as a sacred trust committed unto thee as the appointed minister of Christ in this church and parish, and take heed that they be ever and only used in His service, and for His glory." The churchwardens are then told, "You are to take notice that these bells of the church are committed to the custody of the Vicar of the parish, to be used only with his consent, subject to the ultimate control of the Bishop of the diocese." Then the bells are to chime while the clergy and people return to the church, where appropriate prayers are offered of thankfulness for the gift; That the bells may ever be used with reverence and godly fear; That those who hear them may obey Christ's "loving invitation" to His House of Prayer: That all who are hindered from so assembling by sorrow or sickness may be reminded of the prayers of the Church; Lastly, that all who, in the midst of their worldly occupations, shall hear the Passing Bell, may, too, be warned to prepare for a like end. A special hymn ends the office, which is a very striking and beautiful one.

III.—BELL RINGING AND BELL RINGERS.

IN the dedication services mentioned in the last chapter, the Bishops-celebrant notified churchwardens that the new bells were to be used only after consent by Rector or Vicar. It may therefore be convenient now to sketch shortly the law relating to church bells.

According to the canons, it is only incumbent on parishioners to provide one bell. This agrees with our Prayer Book, where the only mention of a church bell is that which relates to its use in daily service. Here the rubric directs the celebrant to "cause a bell to be tolled a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him." But while deeming one bell alone obligatory, the existence of several bells is recognised, and Canon 88 says that churchwardens must not allow the superstitious use of bells upon "Holydays and Eves abrogated by the Book of Common Prayer, nor at any other time without good cause to be allowed by the minister of the place, and by themselves." The minister is thus clearly given a veto upon the ringing. Consistently with this Canon, our Judges have decided that parishioners cannot, except on the occasion of Divine worship, or perhaps under very special circumstances, procure the ringing of the church bells against the incumbent's consent. And it is an ecclesiastical offence for parishioners and even churchwardens to break into the belfry and ring the bells when his consent is withheld.

Bearing on the respective legal rights of incumbents, churchwardens, and parishioners, I may refer to a curious dispute at Chesterfield 72 years ago as to the church bells there. It had long been the custom to ring them at the races. In 1829-30 the Rev. T. Hill, then Vicar, refused to recognise the custom, on the ground that he thereby sanctioned indirectly the gambling, drunkenness, and debauchery which, he said, were inseparable accompaniments of a racecourse. Much indignation was caused in the town by this refusal; crowded public meetings were held; and it was resolved to try at law the question whether bells paid for by the parishioners were or were not under the Vicar's control. Mr. Robert Baxter, an eminent solicitor, of Doncaster and London, well-known in his day in connection with the Great Northern and other railways, was consulted by Mr. Hill, and quoted Canon 88 to show that the bells could not be rung except when sanctioned by the Vicar and churchwardens jointly. Thereupon indignant parishioners requested the churchwardens to convene a vestry meeting for the purpose of discontinuing the ringers' salaries and other payments. But the Vicar remained firm; and, very properly, from that time, no peals have been rung at Chesterfield to celebrate the races.

Among other points of law dealing with the same question, it appears that churchwardens may, but only with the parishioners' and the incumbent's consent, sell church bells as well as church plate and other church goods for recasting or church repairs. But as churchwardens are a corporate body, they must act jointly. One bell, as appears above, is essential, and must be left. Here, however, the liability of parishioners in the belfry stops. Being only bound to maintain absolute necessaries, they cannot be compelled to keep in order a set of bells, even if already hung in the steeple, for, as already shown, there is no necessity for more than one bell to ring to church and toll at funerals. Prideaux's "Guide to Churchwardens," and Phillimore's "Ecclesiastical Law" may be consulted for more detailed information.

I pass now to a very different topic, the ringers. In the Middle Ages the bells of parish churches were frequently rung by deacons, or perhaps by special servitors. At some places there were Chantry priests, who, in 1511, were directed in their duties by Bishop Oldham, of Exeter. They were to sound or toll a certain number of times with one bell, prior to the full tolling of all the bells, at the canonical hours, after the accustomed manner; at the close of which the service was to begin. Mr. North, in his "Bell Lore," adds:—An interesting illustration of this custom is found upon the font of the parish church of Belton, Lincolnshire, which bears upon its eight sides the various officers of the church represented in rude sculpture. One of these is the "Campanarius" who, attired in his camise, is tolling two bells." In later times lay bell-ringers fell into disrepute for tippling and other irregularities. The old proverb ran:—

Singers and ringers
Are little home bringers.

In 1650 George Fox, the Quaker, solemnly admonished the ringers of St. Peter's, Derby. "Prize your

time now, while you have it, and do not spend it in pleasures or earthliness," he told them, presumably with good reason for this and other exhortation. John Bunyan, it may be remembered, was once a bell-ringer at Elstow, but abandoned this exercise as a source of temptation, to be ranked with profanity, Sabbath-breaking, and evil company.

Coming down to later times, we find the Rev. H. T. Ellacombe, in his "Practical Remarks on Belfries and Ringers," published forty years ago, giving a sad account of irreverence and disorderly conduct among the ringers of that period. Since then great reforms have taken place in belfries, due chiefly to the fact that clergymen show greater interest in the ringing, and sometimes follow the ancient custom by taking part in it themselves.

Companies of ringers are a very ancient fraternity. There was a guild of them at Westminster as early as the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-66); and in 1228 Henry III. "granted to our brethren" of this guild, "who are appointed to ring the great bells" at the Abbey, a yearly grant of money, confirming to them and their successors "all the privileges and free customs" which they had hitherto enjoyed. "The Scholars of Cheapside," in 1603, were one of the societies formed for the study and practice of the art; and in 1637 came into existence "The Ancient Society of College Youths," in London, which took its name from College Hill. They had distinguished supporters. Lord Brereton and Sir Cliffe Clifton were among the founders, and in 1667 Stedman, an enthusiastic printer and ringer of Cambridge, dedicated to them his "Tintinalogia," the first book treating on the principles of change-ringing. It is supposed that the modern societies of "College Youths," "Cumberland Youths," and the like, are relics of these ancient guilds.

The intricacies of change-ringing are too technical for detailed notice here. But the Rev. G. S. Tyack, in his excellent "Book about Bells," gives a clear description of "that complex system of changes" which Stedman invented, and which make "a peal." Briefly, Mr. Tyack explains, "change ringing consists of sounding a ring of bells according to every possible combination, each of which must be used once only. It is usual to commence with a 'round,' or the simple sounding of the bells in regular scale from treble to tenor. The order must then be continually changed, without repetition, until every permutation possible to a ring of that size has been used." I have in a previous chapter mentioned the rapid increase of permutations, according to the number of bells hung, so that a ring of twelve will allow of over 479,000,000 changes, which, at the average rate of 24 changes a minute, would take nearly 38 years in execution. Technically, "a peal" must contain at least 5,000 changes, which can only be rung with seven or more bells, and "from the intricacy of the work, it will at once be obvious that both deft hands and clear heads are needed for it; the former to keep the bell in such perfect control as to insure its sounding only in the right place, and the latter to determine that place amid the continually changing variations." Ringing, in fact, is something more than a means of healthy exercise and amusement. It confers keen pleasure on all who can appreciate a really well-played musical peal. The origin of the curious titles given to the various peals is hard to trace. "Grandsire Bobs," "Grandsire Triples," "Plain Bobs," "Triple Bobs," and "Bob Majors" are among the many uncouth names invented by ringers for their fascinating art.

A whole volume has been devoted (by Mr. J. P. Briscoe, of Nottingham) to the "Curiosities of the Belfry." One of these you may think worth recording, as the incidents are local. At Spalding there used to be a female bell-ringer, widow of the old sexton there; and at Lincoln, also early in the last century, a bell at St. Mark's, well-known as "Old Kate," was similarly rung. In the latter case the old woman, growing infirm, rang the 6 a.m. bell when in bed, the bell-rope being brought through the belfry door to her bedside.

Bearing out the charges of Mr. Ellacombe and others as to their tippling, in now happily past times, is the survival of some huge 'ringers' jugs," used for ale, and strong ale, too. One of these will hold 16 quarts. Another, at Clare, is still larger. No doubt ringing is hard and thirsty work. Still, there are bounds. One legend I give, as it justifies the ale-house. Let us hope it is not invented for that purpose by the men concerned. It is related, then, that certain ringers at the old tower of Witham-on-the-Hill, being wearied and athirst after their exertions one Christmas Eve, left the church for a neighbouring tavern. Having refreshed themselves, they were returning, when one of the party insisted on stopping for "just another mug." After some demur, all stopped accordingly, thus saving their lives, for the tower fell while they were still at their potations.

For keeping due order in the belfries, there were often displayed elaborate rules, generally in doggerel verse, inflicting fines of a groat (fourpence) or a "jugg" of beer for specified offences, such as swearing, brawling ringing in "hat or spur," not keeping time, or turning over a bell, which broke its wooden supports, and spoiled the proper sequence in ringing. The oldest of these quaint laws, supposed to date back during the 16th century, are painted in black and red Gothic letters on the wall at Scotter, Lincolnshire. They are reproduced in Derbyshire, at Hathersage (and date there from about 1660), Chapel-en-le-Frith, Tideswell, and other places. Every belfry poet seems to have tried his 'prentice hand in variations upon the old theme. A Grantham

poet (1764) excels in quantity, running to 48 lines. As a more condensed specimen, though certainly not eminent for rhythm, I quote rules hung in the belfry at Haxey, in the Isle of Axholme, and dated 1785:—

All you that here intend to ring
Mark well before you do begin,
If you ring in great coat, spurs or hat
Sixpence you pay straight down for that.
If you break stay, or quarrel breed,
Twelve pence you pay right down with speed.
If you be fair and do no wrong
Then unto us you shall belong.

I dare say there have perished whole volumes of old belfry songs, inspired by sweet chimes and strong ale, a little of both. But I can only find room for two or three verses taken from one such song preserved among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum, and supposed to be written about 1625. It has a roystering refrain:—

Set wide the bellfry doore,
Bring oyle and tallowe store,
Set ale and wine in score,
We'll neere be sad no more.
Brave Sir John!

Wellcome to the belfry
Thou man of dignity!
Though I a cobbler be
I'll pull a rope with thee,
Brave Sir John!

Let preachers talk of Popes
And Schollers of their tropes,
We'll stick unto our ropes,
For thereby hang our hopes,
Brave Sir John!

"Sir John" was clearly a liberal patron of ringers, who both rang with them and drank with them. In those days, like cricket in our own, a part in bell-ringing, it will be seen, was not disdained by "men of dignity;" it was a recreation shared by rich and poor. Mr. Tyack reminds us that on the roll of "College Youths" was Sir Michael Hicks (in 1699), Sir Watkin Williams Wynn (in 1717), and Lord Mayor Slingsby Bethell (in 1756); while that great lawyer, Lord Chief Justice Hale, was a ringer, and Anthony Wood, the Oxford antiquary of the 17th century, says he "often plucked at the bells of Merton College with his fellow commoners for recreation." Shall we ever see our belfries once more similarly popular among all classes?

IV.—POETRY ABOUT BELLS.

IN all church bells much poetry abides. They suggest it; their tongues utter it to ears attuned. Also they have been the innocent cause of much poetry written about them, good, bad, and indifferent. Probably a chapter devoted to the subject will not be uninteresting to the reader, particularly if I quote a few specimens. Not Schiller, in his "Founding of the Bell," not modern prettinesses by Tom Moore, Eliza Cook, or Father Prout (in his "Bells of Shandon"), but verses of much more ancient and robust growth. These have none of your modern fastidious regard for correct rhyme or rhythm. That a line should be a foot or two out of exact measurement was to the old author neither here nor there. They are rude old belfry rhymes, no more or less; and you must take them with that rough, old-world flavour which naturally belongs to their age and origin.

In my last chapter some versified ringers' rules were given. Why did I prefer Lincolnshire to Derbyshire in this quotation? I may be asked. For a very common-place reason; the Haxey lines were shorter than those of Hathersage, and the chapter was already long enough. But, in order to allay local jealousy, and upon the claim, not altogether certain, that the Hathersage rules are older than those I have already printed, may I introduce them here? The text is taken from Dr. Cox's monumental work, "The Churches of Derbyshire." He, in turn, quotes them from an old manuscript, and conjectures their date to be A.D. 1660, or thereabouts:—

You gentlemen that here wish to ring,
See that these laws you keep in everything;
Or else be sure you must, without delay,
The penalty thereof to the ringers pay.

First, when you do into the bell-house come,
Look if the ringers have convenient room,
For if you do be an hindrance unto them,
Fourpence you forfeit unto these gentlemen.

Next, if you do here intend to ring,
With hat or spur do not touch a string;
For if you do, your forfeit is for that,
Just fourpence down to pay, or lose your hat.

If you a bell turn over, without delay,
Fourpence unto the ringers you must pay;
Or if you strike, miscall, or do abuse,
You must pay fourpence for the ringers' use.

For every oath here sworn, ere you go hence.
Unto the poor then you must pay twelvepence.
And if that you desire to be enrolled
A ringer here, these orders keep and hold.

But whoso doth these orders disobey,
Unto the stocks we will take him straight way.
There to remain until he be willing
To pay his forfeit, or the clerk a shilling.

The spelling in the original is here modified, which is a pity; rhyme, rhythm, spelling should be left in their naked quaintness. Similar rules, as I have said, prevailed not only at Tideswell, Chapel-en-le-Frith, and other Derbyshire parishes, but throughout England. They are found as far west as Cornwall, and it shows the community anciently prevailing among belfries that the same offences, with much the same fines, were specified, varied in expression by any local poet who felt in the vein. At Scotter, in Lincolnshire, whose rules, the oldest on record, are supposed to have been written in the 16th century, the poet, after naming the fine, a groat, payable to "the Clarke," further admonishes the offender thus pleasantly:—

And if you thinck it be to little,
And beare a valliant minde,
Ye more yow give unto him then,
You prove to him more kinde.

A Shropshire poet, at Tong, in 1694, tries to prove the justice of such rules by what logicians would call a non sequitur:—

These laws are olde, and are not newe,
Therefore the clerke must have his due.

At Plymouth (A.D. 1700) and in Cornwall are the same rules, solemnly introduced:—

Lett awfull silence first proclaimed be
And praise unto the Holy Trinity.
Then honour give unto our valiant King,
So with a blessing raise this noble ring.

Hark! how the chirping Treble sings most clear,
And covering Tom comes rowling in the rear;
Now up on end at stay, come let us see
What Laws are best to keep sobriety.
Then all agree and make this their decree.

After which grave exordium the usual rules follow, a very practical reason being given for fines:—

Lett him pay sixpence for each single crime.
'Twill make him cautious 'gainst another time.

The verses wind up with severe censure for disrespect and disobedience, while if the code works well, all will be well in that belfry:—

If any should our Parson disrespect,
Or warden's orders any time neglect,
Lett him be always held in foul disgrace,
And ever after banished this place.

Now round let goe with pleasure to the ear,
And pierce with echo through the yielding air,
And when the bells are ceas'd, then let us sing
God bless our holy Church! God save the King!

Grantham is a far cry from Plymouth, yet we find the same good sentiments otherwise expressed there in 1700:—

If any should our Parson sneer,
Or warden's rules deride,
It is a rule of old most clear,
That such shan't here abide.

The Sabbath Day we wish to keep,
And come to church to pray,
The man who breaks this ancient rule
Shall never share our pay.

And when the bells are down and ceased,
It should be said or sung,
May God preserve the Church and King,
And guide us safely home!

As all these codes forbid the wearing of spurs as well as hats in ringing, we may reasonably assume that gentlemen or substantial yeomen at least were among the ringers, men who rode their own horses to the church, and must have been fairly well-to-do. At Southill, in Bedfordshire, are some belfry verses of quite another order, which read like an answer to the French denunciation of ringers printed in my first chapter:—

We Gentlemen Ringers are nobody's foes,
We disturb none but those who want too much repose.
Our music's so sweet, so enchanting to hear,
We wish there was ringing each day of the Year.
To call the folks to Church in time—
We chime.
When Mirth and Pleasure's on the wing—
We ring.
At the departure of a Soul—
We toll.

And Eastling, in Kent, has on a board in the ringing chamber the following "Articles":—

This is a belfry that is free,
And for all them that civil be;
And if you choose to chime or ring,
It is a very pleasant thing.

There is no music played or sung
Like unto bells when they're well rung.
Then ring your bell well, if you can.
Silence is best for every man.

Hertfordshire was rather famous for its ringers in the 18th century. At Braughing in 1779, the "Youths" of that place acquired fame by ringing on their parish church bells a complete peal of 12,240 bob majors, which occupied seven hours and 34 minutes. Of course a poem was composed in celebration of this feat, and records:—

How long each man did stand with zeal.
An ardent union performed the peal.

In 1767 the "Hertford College Youths" became an important society. Why ringers should so generally style themselves "Youths" I cannot say, seeing that there was never any limit of age in their companies or guilds. Nor, again, can I explain why ringers always ascribe the feminine gender to their bells. It cannot surely be because of the clapper! The Hertford Church was All Saints', and this excellent bell motto was taken by the society: "Intactum Silco; Percute Dulce Cano"—"Untouched, I remain silent: when struck, sweetly do I sing." Every year the Marquis of

Salisbury sent a fat buck for this society's annual festival; and its patriotism may be judged by one of its minutes in 1798, when not only war abroad but invasion seemed imminent:—"Unanimously resolved, that the sum of ten guineas be subscribed towards the exigencies of the State; that the like sum be annually subscribed by the Ringing Society of Hertford College Youths during the present war; and that the treasurer do pay the same into the Bank of England accordingly." Besides perennial loyalty among ringers, I have shown ample evidence that belfries swarm with poets. One was not wanting at Hertford. He opens thus:—

Attend, brother ringers, to what I do say,
In St. Andrew's Church, and on St. Andrew's Day.
At our fam'd town of Hertford the ringers did meet,
And rang a true peal of Grand Tripples complete.
A peal of ten courses,
Two singles combine,
With nine dozen bobs
Make the music sublime.

After this burst of inspiration the author hands down to posterity the names of the ringers, the short time they had been in training, and the well-nigh immortal fame they had won. So he concludes:—

Here's a health to these youths in a full, flowing bowl,
Likewise to John Carr, who's a true British soul;
May their deeds be recorded in the annals of time,
And long may they live in the steeple to chime.

But it is time to pass from poems by ringers to poems written of them. Here, then, I must mention that, down to the 16th century, change-ringing in England was unknown, as it still is abroad. The bells were not cast in tune, and were thus unfit for musical ringing in sequence. It seems to have been only during the 16th century that, in casting new or recasting old ones, care was taken that the bells should be tuneable. In a churchwarden's book of 1510, quoted by North, eight pence was paid for "wyne and pers" consumed by four men and "the clarks of Seynt Anthony's," who went to "see wheyr (whether) Smythe's bell were Tewnabill or not"; and another such entry in 1586 debits the parish with fourteen pence, paid to "John Wever for his tow dayes chardges when he went to Nottingham for them that came to prove the tune of ye bells." Fabian Stedman, the Cambridge enthusiast, whose "Tintinnalogia" has been already noticed, was not, therefore, the inventor of change-ringing, though, no doubt, he did much to improve the art. His work was published in 1668, but before that date bell music was so popular and so well cultivated that England became known as "The Ringing Isle." This is shown in some verses written in 1657, preserved in the Bodleian Library:—

Say, are not Bells of a diviner Birth?
Fiddles are made by men, but of ye Earth
England's ye Ringing Ile.

With more that need not be cited. The author tells us he was a "Scotch Briton," and wrote these lines in his 80th year. He was not alone in his praise. In the same roll of MS. is a sonnet by one Edmund Allen, of Wootton, part of which I extract:—

It was my chance lately abroad to be,
In place where I bell-musicke sweet did heare.
Still I did stand, minding those strains so high,
Which at ye first strange to me did appeare.
Such sublime Sallies in ye same I found
That I was forced awhile to stand my ground.

Like the bells, these old lines sound sweetly. Another contributor to the same Bodleian manuscripts was one Samuel Tabor, of St. John's College, Cambridge, who takes a still higher flight:—

What is 't I heare? Is some cælestial Quire
Of Angels now descended from their higher
Sacred Mansions here to ring a Peale
In th' eares of Mortalls, thus thinking to steale
By these diviner ayres each Mortall's heart
Into a sublime Rapture, quite apart
From sublunary things? Or doe I heare
Th' effect of Phansy ringing in mine eare?
No, no! Such Musicke Phansy doth exceede.

And Mr. Tabor, whose very name is musical, ends a long poem by deciding that, as

Some instruments we know doe farr surpasse
Others for Musicke, so ye wide-mouth'd Bell
None other Musicke e'er could parallel.

No such noble enthusiasm for the art exists in our day. And all these verses, with very many more, less worthy of quotation, in English of various metres, and also in Latin elegiacs, were written in praise of one Oliver Palmer, leader of a band of five change-ringers, whose names are also set forth. Palmer is called "Melodious Sir," and his admiring poets even deign to record in verse that, as a hempen rope chafed his hand, he always rang his bell with a silken rope, a pretty incident in our early belfry history. These lines were written twelve years before Stedman's "Tintinnalogia" appeared.

Lincolnshire, early famous for its number of bells and love of ringing, at once welcomed the new art. Fuller awards it pre-eminence in England for "round-ringing," a rude jangling of untuned bells, though it was surpassed, he says, in greater variety of changes. At the beginning of the 17th century, Lincoln had a company called "Ringers of Our Blessed Virgin Mary." We may fairly assume, from the early "Rules" existing in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire belfries, that change-ringing had become general there, and fair proficiency reached. Of Yorkshire, I regret that no early accounts of the practice of this art have reached me, though we can hardly doubt that, abounding in bells as its capital did, and with bright examples all around it, the county of many acres, and also of many noble religious houses, was not behind its neighbours. So much ringing, indeed, was there in England at this period that, in London, Stow tells us, "men fabled" that it "soured all the drink in the town." Nor is this surprising when the tolling of Tom of Lincoln alone was said to turn the milk sour for several miles round the Cathedral.

V.—SOME FAMOUS BELLS AND BELL FOUNDERS.

HAS the belfry a fascination for some ringers? I judge so from an instance about to be cited. Change-ringing is a manly exercise; it requires aptitude and skill; it gives keen pleasure to other than the ringers. Why then, should it now be in such little repute? Can it be because there are no on-lookers whose applause is gained for individual prowess, as at football or cricket? Such considerations, at any rate, did not weigh with John Bunyan. It has been already mentioned that he gave up ringing for fear he might thereby be tempted to do evil. But, says Southey, he so hankered after his old amusement that he would go and look at the ringers, not without a secret feeling that to do so was unbecoming his new religious profession. This feeling grew upon him, and he came to think, as he looked on, that a bell might fall on him as a judgment. So, when in the Elstow belfry, he took refuge under a convenient beam: then, still alarmed, under a safer angle of masonry; but all to no purpose. Imagination suggested a physical as well as spiritual doom which awaited him if he continued so to offend. Reluctantly, therefore, he left the bell-chamber altogether. One of the peal at Elstow is still called "Bunyan's bell"; and his old love of the art is shown more than once in his "Pilgrim's Progress," for, as his pilgrims approached the Heavenly City, "they thought they heard all the bells therein ring to welcome them." And when they had entered, "then I heard, in my dream, that all the bells in the City rang again for joy."

I have before mentioned the mysteries in the nomenclature of change-ringing, and my inability to solve them. Southey, I am reminded, also gave up this puzzle. "There are plain bob-triples," he says, "bob-majors, bob-majors reversed, double bob-majors, and grandsire-bob-cators, and there is a bob-maximus. Who Bob was, and whether he were Bob Major or Major Bob, that is, whether Major were his name or his rank, and, if his rank, to what service he belonged, are questions which inexorable oblivion will not answer, however earnestly adjured. And there is no Witch of Endor who will call up Bob from the grave to answer them himself," One belfry feat deserves honourable mention here, though it fell short of complete success, In 1796 eight Birmingham ringers began, with hopes of completing, a peal of 15,120 bob-major. For over eight hours and a half they toiled at the ropes, but then, as their admiring chronicler relates, "found themselves so fatigued that they desired the caller would take the first opportunity of bringing the bells home. This he soon did by omitting a bob, and so brought them round, thus making a peal of 14,224 changes in eight hours and 45 minutes, supposed to be the longest ever rung.

Why should not such deeds be sung in glowing verse to inform and benefit posterity? Epitaphs on well-known ringers in their time, recording their exploits, might be quoted, but I forbear. Yet must I mention the honours paid in 1796 to Mr. Patrick, a celebrated composer of church-bell music, and one of the society of "Cumberland Youths," at whose burial in 1796 representatives attended from all the Metropolitan ringing societies, each sounding handbells with muffled clappers, the church bells at the same time ringing a dead peal. His place of interment was St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, where are bells which often rang to greet Queen Elizabeth as she returned from Hatfield, after visiting Lord Burleigh. She was a great admirer of sweet bells, and seldom failed to stop near the church and commend their melody.

Our biggest bells, it must be understood, hang in their lofty abodes in solitary state, speaking seldom along with their sisters close by, and are not rung in peal. The largest and heaviest bell so rung in England is the tenor of a peal of ten in Exeter Cathedral, and called the Grandison, after a bishop of that name, who gave it to the cathedral, and who ruled the diocese from the year 1327 to 1369. It weighs over three tons, seven hundredweight, and has been two or three times re-cast, last in 1729. Our other big bells, when used, are struck by hammers, generally worked by manual levers. Such is the method of sounding Peter of York (quite a modern bell, cast in 1845). Great Tom of Lincoln is sounded by striking with a muffled hammer. Great Peter of Exeter, a second heavy bell belonging to the cathedral there, dates from 1676, and weighs five tons, two hundredweight. It is also struck with a heavy hammer, as it has no wheels. Great Peter of Glouces-

ter, weighing nearly three tons, and the most ancient of all English large bells (about A.D. 1400), is, or was, likewise sounded by striking with an iron hammer. Such a mode of "tolling" is a great source of injury to bells, and accounts for frequent cracking.

But now I must end with belfries and ringers till I approach the large subject of mottoes and inscriptions, which partly concern both. Some useful hints by Mr. North towards belfry reform will be a prosaic, but practical, close. The ringers' chamber, he says, should be made not only clean, but comfortable. It should be furnished with proper light, with pegs for coats and hats, with glazed windows. "Another important step forward is made when the parson, rope in hand, can take his place among the ringers, and by his presence improve their moral standard and the general tone of the belfry." This was written in 1883, a year before Mr. North's lamented death. We may hope that the reform he advocates has often been effected.

It would be invidious, perhaps, in handing down to future ages through the columns of a newspaper the merits of bell-ringers, to withhold altogether those of bell-founders. A long poem in praise of one member of this ancient and noble craft was written near a century and a half ago by a Bedfordshire Rector, the Rev. S. Rogers. Mr. North thought so well of it that he prints it in full, but as it occupies nearly four pages of close print, I can only ask your indulgence for a few lines:—

Tho' various stops the solemn organ grace.
The sprightly treble and majestic bass,
Yet say what bass, what treble can excel
The cheerful matin, or the funeral knell?
What note like that which sounds from Paul's high dome.
From Oxford, or fam'd Lincoln's mighty Tom?
What diapason like their lofty hum?

Loyal Briton as he was, our parson-poet loved to listen when "bells hail in Great George's natal day," and "Jacobites grow loyal" at their sound, though this must have been a poetic illusion. "Let Handel play," he writes, and foreign singers charm operagoers with "soft Italian airs":—

Our country swains with greater pleasure hear
Famed Majors, Caters, Triples, and Grandsire,
Which, while they ring sonorous, clear, and sweet,
The face of commerce smiles along the street.

This last line is masterful, though perhaps a little hard to realise until we think of a rural town on market day, and the beaming face of Hodge as he sells his pigs amid joyous peals from the "merry Christchurch bells," or others. Coming to the "pious founder," our Rector recalls his care to correct discordant notes and make them follow each other, "in truest harmony," and ends with a fine burst of admiration for such a master-worker:—

Proceed, great man, whose fam'd mechanic hand
Works wondrous service to thy native land.
Proceed, till chimes, by thy auspicious art,
Raise noblest feelings in each British heart;
Proceed, till squeamish schismatics shall deign
To hear their sounds, nor think their music vain,
No longer bells with Popery condemn,
But, turn'd to peace, learn harmony from them.

From these concluding lines we may gather that, when the Rector wrote, church bells were thought by some Dissenters to savour of Romish observances and ritual—objections which I shall show hereafter were not shared by our early Puritans. As to founders, space will not permit any detailed mention even of ancient men of mark, and to select any modern masters would seem invidious. It will be of local interest, however, to publish the names of a few ancient founders in Yorkshire. These I owe to the industry of Mr. Tyack in his long and instructive chapter upon bell founders and founding. John of York appears to have been a noted founder in the fourteenth century. The Fabric rolls of York Minster mention a bell founder named John Hoton in the year 1473. I have already mentioned Richard Turnoe and his stained window, representing various processes of casting, placed in the Minster nave, about A.D. 1330. Another ancient memorial at York to some unknown founder is a cross, on one side of which is a brazier, and on the other an antique bell; this was originally placed in the church of St. Denis. William Cureton, of Toft Green, cast a bell in 1658 for Christ Church, King's Court, York. At Toft Green also Samuel Green, father and son, carried on the business of bellfounding for many years. Both are buried at Holy Trinity Church, Micklegate. Other examples of their work are extant in several York churches, and at Filey, where three bells, dated 1675, 1682, and 1700, bear their mark. In the city of York bellfounding ceased with the Dalton foundry in Stonegate early in the last century.

William Oldfield, of Doncaster, cast the "great bell" at Snaith in 1624, at an agreed price of twenty nobles and twenty marks. Daniel Hedderley, of Bawtry, set up a temporary foundry at Winterton, in Lincolnshire. In a former chapter I have mentioned the Oldfields and Hedderleys, of Nottingham, where they flourished for many years. Then much business was done by founders who brought their metal and materials to the place where the casting must be done, to avoid the cost of heavy wheel carriage in days of bad roads. Thus Great Tom of Lincoln, in 1610, was re-cast in the cathedral yard.

Bell enthusiasts are met with in the 17th as in the 20th century. Few days now pass—I had almost said, few hours—without letters from forlorn incumbents, driven by extremity to appeal to strangers for church repairs or reconstruction. All honour to them for zeal to accomplish good works in what they must often deem unpleasant ways. I have a note of a Southern minister, who in 1614, during a period of twelve years, besought money similarly for various objects, including especially a new bell. Good man! His name is recorded thereon, as is

most fit. His parish was poor. Postal facilities in those days were small, and dear. How he succeeded, I know not: but succeed he did, perhaps because, as he tells us, he took as his motto, "Begghard or Beggard." That was the alternative, and the first pulled him through. I pass it on as a good motto for incumbents now working and despairing nigh 300 years after him. There is, of course, another side to this picture of successful begging. At Bethersden, in Kent, the churchwardens' accounts are singularly perfect from the year 1514 downwards. In 1588 a "sese" (a cess or rate) was made by general consent for recasting the great bell. Entries show what the founder received for his work on the new bell, "and also for mettal that was lakynge to make her of suffyciente substance and tewnable accordynge to his bargayne." But it is one thing to obtain promises, and another to secure payment. What befell the unhappy wardens is told in subsequent entries by them:—"We are charged for that we colde not receave the money of those that wear sessed to paye the bell founder," so that "he did procure a wrytt against us." Items follow of "What wee payd the baylly" (bailiff); what "we spente when we wente to agre" with the founder; what "wee spente more when we wente to paye him"; with other piteous records, which some too sanguine incumbents might probably match even in our own day.

Another not infrequent source of disappointment must be noted, as it occurs to bell enthusiasts whether lay or clerical. You get your bell. Perhaps, by happy circumstance, you are able to pay for it. In what tone does it speak when first sounded? Now, you may add much metal to your belfry, possibly with no other return than sore aggravation. Bells, we know, convey articulate sounds to those who have the gift of interpreting their language. At least Southey says so, citing in proof the well-known example of Dick Whittington, who wisely did as the bells told him, and, turning again, was "thrice Lord Mayor of London" accordingly. As additional proof of our former poet laureate's assertion, the case may be cited of a parson who was not happy in his founder, and therefore was disappointed in the dull monotony of his first bell's tone. "Tom-tom-tom," it seemed to say, in a sad, spiritless way, depressing beyond measure to all who were near its range of sound. So this good parson by great effort collected funds for a second bell. It was no better than the first, and his people declared that the two now called "Tom-fool, tom-fool!" again with no animation, and in injured tones, with a decided personal application to himself as the cause of failure. Hoping always for better things, he added a third tenant to his steeple, but the three joined in calling "Tom-fool still!" So at least his parishioners maintained, and ever since the village saying has been "Worse and worse, like the parson's bells."

Other well-authenticated stories exist of bell-language, interpreted clearly though not always rightly. Oddly enough, the two before me refer to advice sought for in the belfry, and given therefrom, when ladies wish to know whether they may prudently wed. A Flemish widow, consulting her confessor on this knotty point, was by him advised to hear what she thought the three bells said when next they rang, for he himself declined responsibility. With a due sense of his priestly duty, however, he exhorted her first to pray earnestly for grace to understand the bells rightly, with a view to her happiness here and hereafter. Did inclination make plain the sound? At all events, the advice given seemed plain: "Take a man! Take a man!" And upon her report to this effect her confessor replied: "Aye, daughter! If the bells have said so, so say I; and not I alone, but the Apostle also and the Spirit, who through that Apostle hath told us when it is best for us to marry." That the wedding proved a happy one we must fain believe. The English story is less pleasant. These bells also seemed to advise wedlock, but the marriage turned out badly, and on listening again after this sad experience, the lady was equally clear she had been wrong in her first rendering, and that what the five bells counselled (now, alas! too late) was "Do let well alone! Do let well alone!" Has it not been said that "Too late!" are the saddest words in our or any language?

In our day the words most distinctly spoken by bells are, I think, those of the Westminster chimes, which now proclaim the hour and its four quarters from so mighty a church tower and steeple:—

Lord, in this hour,
Be Thou my Guide!
Then, by Thy power,
No foot shall slide!

And how clearly next the hour bell, as it strikes, seems to respond with a sonorous, deep "Amen."

VI.—THE SPOLIATION OF BELFRIES.

LIKE most violent changes, change ringing did not escape opposition. Some verses given below show discontent in the parsonage, as though in some instances the new and popular method had been forced by parishioners upon unwilling incumbents. These lines have been attributed to the "saintly" George Herbert, of whom Richard Baxter wrote (in 1681), "Heart work and Heaven work make up his books." But the real author was Herbert's friend and contemporary, the Rev. Christopher Harvey, Vicar of Clifton, Warwickshire, who wrote "The Synagogue" (published in 1640) in imitation of Herbert's "Temple." This poem received strong commendation from Isaac Walton, the pious, poetic angler, and Herbert's loving biographer, who addresses Harvey in eulogistic verse which begins:—

I loved you for your "Synagogue" before
I knew your person, but now love you more.

Harvey in this poem treats under separate heads all things pertaining to the church, its stile, gate, burial ground, porch, font, bells, "reading pew," pulpit, and so on. He writes similarly of all church ministrants, high and low, from Bishops downwards, including churchwardens, overseers, and sextons, giving each subject an ingenious spiritual application. When the sexton, who

Ope's the door,
And shuts it, sweeps the floor,
Rings bells, digs graves, and fills them up again,
All emblems unto men,

is dealt with, these lines occur:—

Lord! Ringing changes all our bells hath marr'd,
Jangled they have, and jarr'd
So long, they're out of tune, and out of frame,
They seem not now the same.
Put them in frame anew, and once begin
To tune them so that they may all chime in.

Probably inexperienced ringers, trying the new and more difficult method, bungled it badly. The old bells, too, were ill adapted to it, not being always tuneable. "Jangled" and "jarred," therefore, they may well have seemed to sensitive ears when attempts were made at musical scientific combinations. Our good Vicar of Clifton cannot have been alone in preferring their simplicity and dignity when rung as of old.

I now approach a branch of my subject which no lover of bells or student of church history can read without pain and indignation. At the dissolution of the monasteries, and during the three reigns which stamped our nation as Protestant, belfries no less than churches were singled out for spoliation. According to the historian Stow, bells were then even made sport for wagering. He relates that Henry VIII. staked a bell tower, with a lofty spire of timber, which stood in St. Paul's churchyard, and contained four "Jesus bells," the largest in London, against £100 betted by a courtier, Sir Miles Partridge, who won the bet, and had the bells broken up and the tower and spire pulled down. Arthur Bulkeley, Bishop of Bangor, sold the bells of his cathedral in 1541. But Sir Miles Partridge was hanged on Tower Hill, and the Bishop is said to have been struck blind as he witnessed the shipment of his bells to some foreign port. In this and other cases the judgment of Heaven, it was thought, overtook many men who had mistreated sacred things solemnly dedicated by the Church to God's service.

Royal confiscations, to replenish the Exchequer, under Henry VIII. and Edward VI., accounted for many losses of fine old bells. But private greed seems to have been responsible for even greater mischief. Unscrupulous laymen badly misused the opportunity afforded them by unsettlement in religion and worship. Edward VI. tried in vain to stop the robbery of church plate, bells, and lead. In 1549 a Commission was issued to ascertain the quantity and value of church furniture and ornaments throughout England, and forbid their sale or misappropriation. It was not effectual, and was followed three years afterwards by another Commission, directing "that ther shuld be takyn and mado a just veu, survey, and inventory of all goodes, plate, juels, vestyments, bells, and other ornaments within every paryshe belonging to any Churche, Chapell, Brotherod, Gylde, or Fraternyty within this our Realme." These valuables were to be delivered "to the charge of such porsons as shuld kepe the same safely." In 1553 a third Commission ordered that, of the plate, among other valuables, thus collected, one or two chalices should be left for use in every cathedral or collegiate church, and one chalice for every parish church or chapel, while the Commissioners were to "sell to our use by weight all parcels

or pieces of metall, except the metall of one great bell and saunse bells, in every of the said churches or chapels."

It would seem that Church reformers by this time had broken up many old bells; and this order swept all away, including the numerous hand-bells and small bells then in use for service. All Deans, Provosts, Churchwardens, Ministers, and parishioners were strictly enjoined "that they and everye of them do safely kepe unspoiled, unembesiled, and unsold all suche bells as do remayne, and the same to conserve untill our pleasur be therein further knowne." Under various specious pretexts, however, impudent thefts still continued. A State paper of 1554, when Queen Mary had come to the throne, shows how far this spoliation had gone in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. It stops the shipment of bell metal from Kingston-on-Hull and Great Grimsby, and mentions its total weight at those two ports as 49,114 pounds, collected from parishes in the two counties. Boston, Louth, and the beautiful abbey church of Thornton, near Grimsby, appear to have suffered greatly, the first town losing nine bells, the second six, the third no fewer than sixteen. Queen Mary's intervention came too late to restore them, and no record exists to show that the broken metal was ever re-cast.

After Queen Elizabeth's accession the work of spoliation was renewed, not now by the State, but again by private hands. A proclamation of hers sets forth "that some patrons of churches and others possessed of impropriations had prevailed with the parsons and parishioners to take or throw down the bells of churches or chapels, and the lead of the same, and to convert the same to their private gain, by which ensued not only the spoil of the said churches but even a slanderous desolation of the Houses of Prayer." It was therefore commanded "that no manner of person should from henceforth take away any bells or lead off any church or chapel under pain of imprisonment and such further fine for the contempt as shall be thought meet."

There are records of legal proceedings taken against some of these private offenders, but in most cases they escaped punishment through local influence and the connivance or active aid of neighbours. Further proclamations of Elizabeth again prohibited the export of bell metal. By this time a new trade had sprung up, that of dealers in bells seized by the Government, and sold at the price of old metal. "The public accounts of the time," says Mr. Stahlschmidt, "preserved at the Record Office, teem with accounts of bells and lead thus sold." Private appropriations no doubt contributed largely to the accumulation of bell metal at our outports, and many foreign belfries were probably enriched with bells cast from those broken up and exported during the English Reformation. Such shameless conversions, public and private, of Church property, could not have occurred without great popular indifference as to its fate. The State itself set bad examples. For instance, in Jersey the church bells were sold by direction of the Privy Council under Edward VI., and the proceeds applied in strengthening the land fortifications, one bell alone, the largest, being reserved in each church for ordinary services. No surprise, then, need be felt at churchwardens' entries in some Holderness parishes showhow the smaller handbells were disposed of, and the common uses they were put to. At Hemswell two were sold "to make mortar of." At Hacconby it is recorded as to the "Sayeringe bell" that "Thomas Carter hath made a horse bell thereof to hang at a horse's eare." At Hoge, the "Saeringe bell" was "sold to Austin Earle to put about a calve's neck." Waddingham churchwardens in their return of church furniture in 1566, note "one Saeringe bell weh honge at a Maypole toppe, and what has become thereof we know not." The Maypole was kept up at the cost of the parish, which helps to explain this bell's strange destination.

Again, in 1566, churchwardens at Ackborough, Lincolnshire, confessed that a year before they had "broken in peces" a "sakeringe bell and one hand belle" which belonged to the church in Queen Mary's time. At Ashby-de-la-Launde, in the same county, churchwardens stated that hand bells formerly belonging to the church were 'stolle in Queen Maries tyme." There are similar entries of bells defaced, broken, and sold, or stolen, at Exworth, Aslackby, Aswarby (one hand bell "made a morter of"); Bardney, where the churchwardens report the sale of hand bells, "with other mettel of papistrye," now defaced; Hacconby, and other places. In 1870 a bronze sacring bell was found walled up in the south aisle of Bottesford Church, near Brigg, probably to save it from being broken up or from confiscation. At Preston, in the East Riding, the tradition is that in Elizabeth's reign the bells were taken from the belfry, being sold to a foreigner, whose ship, when just clear of the Humber, and under easy sail, suddenly foundered.

English Puritans, though opposed to Church music and to everything which had once been put to superstitious uses, did not "wage direct war against bells." Yet, in the general indifference which then prevailed, the tower was frequently rifled of its contents. It is hardly credible, but is true, that the people of Yarmouth in 1650 petitioned Parliament "to be pleased to grant them a part of the lead and other useful materials of that vast and altogether useless cathedral in Norwich, towards the building of a workhouse to employ their almost starved poor, and repairing their piers." If, in the opinion of such people, there was no good reason why a noble cathedral should not be stripped of its roof-covering and left to decay from the ravages of frost and rain, bells were little likely to be respected. Similarly, the parishioners of Skidbrook, in Lincolnshire, sold

two of their bells for £20, spending the money upon church repairs and scouring out the sand from their choked-up haven. In the reign of Philip and Mary, the churchwardens were called to account for this misapplication of Church property, and were required to replace the missing bells or find others equally good. Then they repented, alleging that they had been "moved by universal talk, and by persons openly preaching against bells, and other laudable ceremonies of the Church, affirming the use of them to be superstitious and abominable." And they did most humbly petition the Privy Council to be discharged from the obligation imposed upon them, or else they must forsake their parish, being poor and not able to bear the aforesaid charges. This prayer was granted, so they were let off easily.

In Scotland, where organs were condemned as unholy chests of whistles, and Jenny Geddes did not throw her stool at her minister's head in vain, bells fared far worse than with us. Archbishop Abbott, of Canterbury, being in Scotland in 1632, relates that he was shown the church at Dunbar by a "crumpt, unseemly person, the minister thereof." On inquiring how many bells there were, the answer was "None!" Inquiring further how this chanced, the "crumpt, unseemly person" replied that Dunbar was "one of the Reformed churches.' To him this seemed quite a sufficient reason for the absence of even a single bell. In Edinburgh the Archbishop found among all the churches only one bell. It was "left booming alone," if I may vary by a single letter Moore's well-known line, its companions having been sold and shipped to the Low Countries, where Calvin and Knox did not hold sway, and bells were better appreciated. Many traditions tell again how vessels were wrecked as a judgment upon the men engaged in this sacrilegious traffic.

VII.—THE CONFISCATION AND DESTRUCTION OF BELLS.

BESIDES the loss of church bells at the Reformation through State confiscations or private theft, another cause less generally known led to the same end. Under Edward VI. and Elizabeth the changes in religion occasioned outbreaks, actual or apprehended, in the west and north of England. In 1569 the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland raised an incipient rebellion in the north, with the object of re-establishing the Roman Catholic religion and liberating Queen Mary. A document of that year preserved in the Record Office sets forth certain proceedings to be taken in the northern counties, as a punishment for this insurrection. It is drawn up by Sir William Cecil, and one of the measures he directs is that "wherever any bells were rung to raise rebellion, only one bell is to be left in the steeple in memory thereof." Whether this direction was followed, or to what extent, we are not informed. Similar measures had already been taken in the West, under Edward VI., whose Privy Council, led by Protector Somerset, issued the following order in September, 1549:—

"Whereas the rebels of the country of Devonshire and Cornwall have used the bells in every parish as an instrument to stir the multitude and call them together: thinking good to have this occasion of attempting the like hereafter to be taken away from them: and remembering withal that by taking them down the King's Majesty may have some commodity towards his great charge that way: we have thought good to pray your Lordship [the Lord-Lieutenant] to give order for taking down the said bells in all the churches within those two counties; leaving in every church one bell, the least in the ring which now is in the same, which may serve to call the parishioners together to the sermons and divine services. In the doing thereof we require your Lordship to use such moderation as the same may be done, with as much quietness and as little offence to the common people as may be."

Mr. Dunkin, who published this interesting record in the Reliquary of 1873, believes that the order was not carried out; but on this point, as in the northern counties, there is only conjecture. Strype tells us that at this period two men named Champion and Chichester solicited and obtained a grant of many bell clappers; and it is suggested that they may have done so for the purpose of saving the bells. Such a surmise is more charitable than contemporary records allow us to credit without strict proof.

Fire was another frequent cause of injury or total destruction both to church and belfry. One

of the cautions issued by insurance companies in our own day is against plumbers who light fires on house roofs to melt their lead. It is curious that these workmen have continued a perpetual source of danger for over at least a thousand years. It was thus that Croyland Abbey, one of the glories of Lincolnshire, perished A.D. 1091. It is said to have had the first known ring of bells in England, and this was afterwards increased to two rings, much rejoiced in by the monks. Among them were seven large bells named Guthlac, Bartholomew, Botelm, Turketyl, Tatwyn, Pega, and Begar. "When these seven bells were rung," says Ingulphus, then Abbot, "they produced an exquisite harmony, nor was there then such a peal in all England." ("Nec erat tunc tanta consonantia campanarum in totâ Anglia." Their melody resounded for many miles through the fens and plains, cheering the poor people who dwelt there, and leading them ever to pious thoughts and exercises. Guthlac, the tenor bell—so named after a Saxon saint—was specially renowned. Its tone, Fuller declares, was even a remedy for headache. All these bells were fused by the fire, originated by plumbers, who must from the beginning have been agents of the evil one.

Poor Ingulphus, as he ran distracted to and fro, was badly burnt by droppings of molten metal. In his chronicles he gives a piteous description of irreparable losses then suffered. "All our manuscripts were shrivelled and burnt up; our beautiful charters, written in capitals and adorned with golden crosses, miniatures, and fine initial letters, all destroyed. Old and exquisitely written grants of Mercian Kings, richly embellished with paintings in gold, and numbering nearly 400, totally destroyed." Such an enumeration makes a collector's mouth water. Luckily, a few Saxon deeds escaped, these having been removed from the charter-room "to teach the younger monks the Saxon characters, which had been brought into disuse by the Normans. These are now our principal records, which were laid aside and slighted, as written in a barbarous character. We lost our whole library, consisting of more than 300 principal volumes, besides over 400 lesser ones. It was thus that our records and jewels, our books and furniture, our bells and steeples, our vestments and provisions, perished under my unfortunate administration, in a few hours. Wretched me, who lived here to be an eye-witness of this dreadful scene!" Turketyl, Abbot, A.D. 946-75, had left to his successors a dying charge to beware of fire. Ingulphus deplores that he did not take to heart this warning, and adds that his deep sorrow is the best atonement he can offer for his grievous fault. How wholly inadequate! And yet what precautions avail against those enemies of their race beforementioned, who in the ages have wrought more havoc in our beautiful old churches, cathedrals, and mansions than the most mischievous iconoclast!

After this fire the monks erected "a humble belfry," placing therein "two small bells, which Fergus, the coppersmith, of Saint Botolph's town (Boston) lately presented to us, there to remain until years of greater prosperity, when we propose by the Lord's help to make alterations in all these matters for the better." Poor Croyland suffered often from fire. It was burnt more than once by the Danes in their ravages along the eastern coast. In 1171 it was again a prey to the flames. Abbot Ralph Merske (1353-81) built a campanile. We read also that Abbot Lytlington (1427-69) caused some of the bells to be recast, so that they "might be brought to a state of more perfect harmony." There our knowledge of the famous Croyland bells abruptly ends. What became of them at the dissolution of monasteries is not recorded, though there is a tradition that some of them were transferred to neighbouring churches at Moulton and East Pinchbeck. Probably they were among the mass of broken metal at Hull and Grimsby stopped from exportation by an Order in Council already quoted. My last word upon Croyland must be of Earl Waltheof, because he was, or is supposed to have been, a Hallamshire worthy, and undoubtedly was a great benefactor of this famous abbey. He was beheaded, as we know, on a charge of conspiring against the Conqueror. The monks relate that, at his execution, not being allowed to finish the Lord's Prayer, his head after it was cut off uttered with a loud and distinct voice, "Deliver us from evil!"

In numberless cases, of which history says nothing, fire must have deprived us of ancient bells. Lightning was a constant source of danger, spite of the alleged power of bells to avert it. Towers or steeples falling through age or scamped work were another source of destruction. At Conisholme, Fulstow, Lusby, and other Lincolnshire parishes bells were broken in this way and never recast. To this add the effects of natural wear and tear after centuries of usage, and of mischief caused by ignorant and reckless ringers striking the sensitive metal with heavy hammers, a frequent cause of cracking. Sometimes poor or niggardly parishioners sold their bells to pay for church repairs. This was done in Lincolnshire, at Gadney, Fosdyke (where four out of five bells thus disappeared), Fallathy, Howell, Skegness, South Reston, Sturton Magna, and other places. Thimbleby is held up to shame by Mr. North for sacrificing six bells "to pay for exchanging an ancient Gothic church for a so-called classic and unsightly structure." This picture has its reverse, for at Meopham, in Kent, when the bells were being recast, a deficiency of metal was supplied by stripping off the brasses from tombs in the church, with their beautiful figures and inscriptions!

In the seventeenth century quite a different cause accounts for the disappearance of so many of the

large, heavy bells preferred in mediæval times. This was the introduction of change ringing, an art which required not heavy bells, as in the old "rings," with dignity and grandeur of tone, which, as Mr. North reminds us, was in old times the chief object sought, but a greater number of bells, and those in musical sequence. This want, as he explains, "could be met in two ways, either by adding new trebles to the existing heavy rings, which was the best, but most expensive way, or by recasting, say, four heavy bells into six or eight light ones, and so increasing the number without buying more metal. This was the least expensive, and, therefore, the most popular plan. By this means a great number of our ancient bells disappeared from the larger town churches. It ceases, therefore, to be a matter for surprise that it is chiefly in small rural churches, with few bells, where the temptation to change-ringing could not exist, that we chiefly expect, and usually find, ancient bells." Naturally the new and lighter ones were of inferior tone and sweetness.

It is lamentable to think how our belfries suffered from all these causes. In 1882, Mr. North, of whose services in preserving old bell records it is hardly possible to speak too highly, published his great work on the church bells of Lincolnshire. He loved them dearly, and in this bulky volume of 780 pages speaks of the losses sustained there with justifiable sadness and indignation. Pious founders and donors had enriched Lincoln above most English shires with grand old bells. Relying on authentic and official documents of 1549, he finds that at the Reformation the parish churches of Lincolnshire possessed 1,800 great bells, and 485 Sanctus bells. He reckons that since the death of Edward VI., at a moderate computation, 400 large bells have been lost to the county, irrespective of over 400 Sanctus bells. According to ancient inventories still existing, in the reign of Edward VI. no Lincolnshire church, however small, had less than two great bells, "whereas there are now about 200 old parish churches in the county with only one bell, and that in many cases a miserable ting-tang." In no other English county, I believe, do such complete records of church bells exist as those which Mr. North compiled for Lincolnshire. When he wrote, in 1882, it possessed 2,034 church bells, including 72 priests' and other smaller ones, distributed among 683 churches. During the twenty years which have since passed, however, this number must have considerably increased. Of these "rings," as sets of bells are called (peals being, strictly, the performances upon the "rings"), the larger number, 203, consisted of three bells, accounting for 609 of the total. There were one ring of ten; 18 of eight; 46 of six; 68 of five; 48 of four; and 51 of two bells. The churches with single bells numbered 248. Of the total, 353, or about 17½ per cent., were cast before the year 1600, a larger proportion of old bells than can be found in other counties mentioned. Complete rings of ancient bells are still hanging in 30 Lincolnshire churches, including Branston, Barnetby-le-Wold, Somerby, near Brigg, South Somercotes, Wath, and Rowston. As already noticed, the earliest dated bells in the county are two at South Somercotes, cast in 1423.

VIII.—VICISSITUDES OF BELFRIES.

IN my last article I dealt with the famous belfry belonging to the still more famous Abbey of Croyland, its periods of glory, its periods also of decay, closing in utter oblivion, as though those tuneful bells had been suddenly swallowed up by mother earth, nobody knowing how or where. Among the vicissitudes of other belfries, those of Sheffield, Lincoln, and Canterbury may be briefly mentioned, not as the most remarkable of their kind, but as more or less local and typical.

It will be easily understood that church bells in a populous city enjoyed exceptional advantages. Benefactors were more numerous; persons interested in bell melody, and in perpetuating it, were more numerous too. But Sheffield was peculiarly fortunate in possessing, long before its municipal incorporation, two bodies, the Church Burgesses and the Town Trust, whose duty or whose pleasure it was to secure adequate church service both in the steeple and fabric. How disappointing, then, to find here no trustworthy record of any pre-Reformation bells! That such existed and were worthy of an ancient manufacturing centre can hardly be doubted. Yet we know not how many there were, when they were hung, who gave them, where they were founded, to what saints they were dedicated, or what marks, ornaments, and inscriptions they bore. This is, indeed, a blank in local history—

hiatus valde deflendus. Would there had been some mediæval chronicler to imitate Mr. Charles Hadfield, and hand down to posterity the quaint, solemn ceremony which greeted and hallowed Sheffield's earliest bells, their birthplaces and names. For such reasons Mr. Hadfield's description of the bells of St. Marie's, modern as they are, is a welcome addition to the—alas! scanty—history of Sheffield belfries.

Local chronicles, then, can only begin some years after the Reformation. Dr. Gatty, in his interesting little volume, "Sheffield: Past and Present," published in 1873, tells us that in the middle of the 17th century the organ in the parish church was silenced by the Sheffield Puritans, who do not, however, seem to have tried to silence the bells. As to these bells, the oldest of this period, called "Tom Tinkler," "a supernumerary and successor to the Sanctus of the Roman service, was dated 1588." The fourth bell, we are told, was given by the Earl of Shrewsbury (Gilbert), and his Countess, in 1606; the third was given by the Cutlers' Company in 1688. In 1799 the bells were recast, and as this process was carried on in a building which stood close by, tradition runs that some townspeople, like those of Lincoln at one recasting of Great Tom, threw into the molten metal silver mugs and other silver articles, partly from pious motives, partly from the mistaken notion that thereby the tone of the bells would be made sweeter.

Mr. R. E. Leader ("Reminiscences of Sheffield") supplies some additional information. The Church Burgesses gave three bells in 1695. In 1745 a new ring of eight was put up, when the Cutlers' Company, as I gather from the inscription, recast the bell given by their predecessors in 1688:—"Donum Societatis Cutlariorum. Anno Domini 1688. John Spooner, Master Cutler, 1745." In part or in whole the recasting of 1799 must have been unsatisfactory, for Mr. Leader cites a subscription of £100 by the Town Trustees in 1804 towards purchasing new bells, besides giving the ringers five guineas "on opening them." There were then ten bells, to which two were afterwards added, so that our Sheffield belfry is well tenanted. But these are meagre details, which do not satisfy zealous inquirers into bell origins, antiquity, and pedigree. To the Sheffield belfry I shall return hereafter, when treating of bell user.

How different the record at Lincoln! Clear evidence exists of two "large and sonorous" bells given to the cathedral there (A.D. 1173-82) by Geoffrey Plantagenet, a natural son of Henry II. Then there was a perfect ring (their exact date is not known) in St. Hugh's steeple; and in 1308 a second fine ring of six "Lady bells" was in existence, ancestors of the six which until 1834 graced the central or Rood tower. "Great Tom" of today had several ancestors, whose name and metal he inherits. Why he bore that name, and what place was his original home, are alike uncertain. Some hold that he was dedicated to St. Thomas, of Canterbury; others that he was so called after the bigger and older "Tom" of Oxford; a third party reject the Christian style, and derive his name from a corruption of the Norman "Grand Ton." Then as to his origin, how numerous the traditions, though most agree that he was stolen. According to some authorities, like his Oxford namesake, he was one of the spoils from Oseney Abbey. Other writers say he came from the Lincolnshire priory of Markby, which possessed one of the largest bells in the kingdom until Bishop Longlands purloined it for his cathedral. A writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine" of 1807 relates that "Great Tom" was carried away from a religious house near Sheffield; and a well-known local historian, Mr. S. O. Addy ("Historical Memorials of Beauchief Abbey") identifies this place with the Premonstratensian house at Beauchief, Derbyshire. The tradition is that the White Canons here were proud possessors of a great bell given to them by one of their old Priors, and that certain bad men, paid or otherwise, induced thereto by the envious Dean and Chapter at Lincoln, removed this bell at midnight in a waggon, the horses' shoes being reversed to evade pursuit or detection. Mr. North dismisses this tradition as "highly improbable." Still, Mr. Addy is an antiquarian of authority; his contributions to local history in and around Sheffield, through the columns of the "Telegraph" and otherwise, cannot be lightly set aside; and, in the prevailing gloom and uncertainty, he may be right. Yet another story is that "Great Tom" was floated down the River Nene on a raft from Peterborough, and, by way of Car or Bell Dyke (once a wide and deep canal), to Lincoln, being either a present from the Abbot at the former place or forcibly taken by the Lincoln people. In appropriating relics, missals, bells, and church furniture generally, monks and other religious persons in mediæval times were none too scrupulous, deeming all fair in religion as in war.

This Lincolnshire Stentor, as old Fuller called him, adding that fifty lesser bells might be made out of him, has seen and suffered much. He was worn out and recast in 1610; how often before is unknown. Found to be cracked again in 1827, he was recast of larger weight. This of itself was a laudable undertaking. Unfortunately, in order to provide the metal required for Tom, and for two quarter bells, it was resolved to sacrifice the six Lady bells before mentioned, on a plea that one of those was cracked and the whole wanted re-hanging. Mr. North almost weeps as he describes how these fine Lady bells were thus "for ever lost to the church from which their melody had issued for so many

years, while the cathedral also lost the distinction of being the only one in the kingdom possessing two rings of bells." And all this done "to provide a great bell which could not be rung," and quarter bells which hardly anybody wanted! Such was the cheese-paring work of 1835, when two quarter bells were added. As though to show disgust at their own degradation, these component parts of the ancient Lady bells refused to ring in correct tune. They were, therefore, recast in 1880, and their number increased to four, at the cost of Mr. N. Clayton, High Sheriff of Lincoln in 1881, and of his son-in-law, Mr. A. S. Shuttleworth. Great Tom, thus so often born anew, now scales 5 tons 8 cwt.

From Lincoln to Canterbury is a far pilgrimage, yet the noble Cathedral which gives its name to our chief archbishoprie deserves brief notice, even by readers subject to the northern Primacy. The story of the Canterbury bells, so interesting in English church history, is again a sad one. Their original abode was in a detached campanile south of the Cathedral, either of Saxon or Norman work. This bell tower was destroyed—by an earthquake, it is said—A.D. 1382. During the Middle Ages the munificence of our ancestors seemed to be concentrated upon all that concerned church building and furnishing. Bells were not forgotten, and figure largely in the more than princely list of southern benefactions. Mr. Stahlschmidt ("Bells of Kent") has taken infinite trouble to trace their unhappy destiny. I follow his lengthened researches very shortly. Prior Ernulph gave to the Cathedral one large bell. It was not large enough to satisfy his successor Conrad, who recast it, with fresh metal, adding four smaller ones. Sixty years later, Prior Wylert gave a sixth, so enormous that, according to a Latin entry in "Anglia Sacra," "triginta duo homines ad sonandum trahunt." That 32 men should be required to ring one bell sounds like a monkish fable. It is assumed, however, that the bell was rung Continental fashion, as the Czar bell at Moscow is rung, by men who simply tug the clapper (itself of immense weight) from one side to another. Besides these six bells, Henry of Eastry (Prior 1285-1331) gave one dedicated to St. Thomas the Martyr, and weighing nearly 72cwt., and Prior Hathbrand (1339-70) two more large bells, dedicated, as the Cathedral itself is, to Our Blessed Lord and St. Dunstan. All these were hung in the campanile, and were presumably broken when it fell.

Before its fall, pious gifts had stocked the central or Angel tower, built by Archbishop Lanfranc (now called "Bell Harry" Tower) with three bells, weighing respectively 1,460, 1,210, and 1,124 lbs. Four still larger bells were given by Archbishop Arundel, and are supposed to have been recastings of those from the shattered campanile. They weighed 1,646, 2,272, 3,646, and 7,188 lbs. Prior Chillenden (A.D. 1391-1411) furnished the central tower with another bell. The form of service at the benediction of these five bells, April 8, 1409, is still preserved in the registry at Lambeth. They were dedicated to the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary, the Archangel Gabriel, St. Blaise, and John the Evangelist; and the Latin record says that, besides great ecclesiastics, other clerks and laymen were present in large numbers ("in multitudine copiosa"). In the north-western or Arundel tower, four bells were hung A.D. 1316. An untimely end befell them all. Not one pre-Reformation bell now survives. Most of them were confiscated by the Crown at the dissolution of monasteries in 1540. Their epitaph is written in an old record that when Henry VIII. had reigned 32 years there was sold to two dealers therein named "certain bell metal, containing 24,646 lbs. in weight, being parcel" of bells "late in the great Bellfraye of Christchurch, in the city of Canterbury." The net result is that, out of the ten bells which make up the existing "ring," none is older than 1726. There are two others, "Great Dunstan," the clock bell, and "Bell Harry," which hangs atop of the centre tower, and is the oldest (A.D. 1535). It is said to have been originally brought from France and given to the Metropolitan Cathedral by "Bluff Harry," in his earlier and more gracious days, while earning from the Pope his title, "Defender of the Faith."

I like to contrast this ruthless destruction and subsequent neglect with the simple, hearty love for bells which prevailed of old, so that then, by the bounty of laymen and clerics, these sweet harbingers of the church were never wanting. To this effect is an idyllic story told by the monks of St. Albans. A Saxon noble, one Lyulph, who dwelt in the woods around them, was rich in goats and sheep. Therefore he sold many of these, and bought a bell for the Abbey. On hearing its sound when hung, he called to his wife in the English speech, "Eya! How cheerily now my goats bleat and my sheep baa!" Thereon his wife also bought a bell, and the two rang out in most pleasant unison. So when the wife heard them she said, "Do they not in troth sweetly tell of God's favour, Who hath joined me and my husband in lawful matrimony, and in the bond of mutual love!"

IX.—MARKS AND MOTTOES ON BELLS.

BY your permission I come now to a branch of my subject which is difficult of adequate treatment. Marks and mottoes distingnish most bells, old or new. To do these full justice illustrations are needed. As they cannot be supplied, some attempt at general description must suffice. Those of my readers who seek for pictorial effect will find artistic reproductions of bell inscriptions, founders' marks, and ornaments in the elaborate works of North, Downman, Stahlschmidt, and other authors.

Most of the old pre-Reformation bells are finely stamped. There is, to start with, a cross enclosed in a medallion of various forms—square, lozenge-shaped, or octagonal. These initial crosses are beautifully fashioned, and are frequently formed by an arrangement of the fleur-de-lis or, less frequently, the rose, both flowers emblems of the Virgin. The fleur-de-lis was also a Royal badge, as English Sovereigns then and long after claimed a right to the crown of France. Such again was the Tudor rose, so that these flowers might be used in either sense. On a few bells the pentacle (a five-branched candlestick or five-pointed star) replaces the cross. Some bells in Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire bear the fylfot, or cross champonee, made by two so-called hammers of Thor. I have already noticed this supposed adaptation from Buddhist sources, 600 years before Christ, and found afterwards in Scandinavia. It is mentioned by Mr. Baring Gould in his "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," and is supposed to have once had some mystical significance in English heraldry and in mediæval ecclesiastical art. It is represented on a very early brass, A.D. 1277, covering the tomb of Sir John D'Aubernon, at Stoke d'Aubernon, Surrey. Number six bell at Heanor and number five at Matlock, are stamped with this peculiar cross. On an Alfreton and a Hathersage bell it is placed in the initial capital of a fine Lombardic inscription, "Gloria in Excelsis Deo." The fylfot cross is also figured on a founders' shield on bells at Dronfield, Baslow, Eckington, Alfreton, Whitfield, and other churches.

After the cross on the bell comes the founder's shield, equivalent to our modern trade-mark. Sometimes this shield bears the Royal arms, surmounted by a crown, implying that the founder had Royal patronage and authority. Sometimes the shield contains the founder's initials, or a rebus upon his name, with the badge of the company to which he belonged. Now and then a bell is figured upon the shield, with the founder's initials on either side of it, or attached to the clapper. Other founders' stamps are crowned heads, supposed to represent Edward I., Queen Philippa, Henry VI., Queen Eleanor, Edward III., with Margaret of Anjou. They are placed upon bells at Duffield and Chaddesden, Derbyshire. No safe conclusion as to the age of a bell can, however, be drawn from any of these distinctive marks, for the same old ones were in continued use for many successive generations of bell-founders, either legitimately acquired by purchase or descent, or boldly appropriated, even by a distant firm, when an old foundry became extinct. Thus, the pre-Reformation mark on the bell at Chaddesden just mentioned was placed on it in 1742, and that at Duffield in 1786, both bells proceeding from well-known Nottingham founders, the Hedderleys. The passing on of bell stamps, rightfully or wrongfully, from one firm of founders to another, can be traced in one instance for 300 years, from the 15th to the 18th century. The Royal head stamps are supposed to have belonged originally to London founders.

Unfortunately, ancient bells were seldom dated, though expert campanologists can sometimes determine their approximate date from the shields or lettering. The earliest known English bell bearing a date is that of Claughton, Lancashire, A.D. 1297. There are undated bells of a much earlier period, one, for example, at Chaldon, in Surrey, shaped much like a common flower-pot, and presumably of the 12th century. The date assigned to a bell at Lichfield St. Chad, Staffordshire, A.D. 1255, is disputed. If genuine, this bell is 646 years old. The Rev. E. A. Downman, author of "The History of Bolsover," and "Ancient Church Bells in England" (1898), says there is as yet discovered only one other dated bell of the 13th century; two of the 14th; 13 of the 15th century; and 13 of the first half of the 16th. Yorkshire has only four of the 15th century—at Terrington, 1400; Thirsk, 1410; and St. John's and St. Crux, York, 1408 and 1423. Notts has one, Beckingham, 1409; Lincolnshire two, at

South Somercotes, 1423; and Somerby, near Brigg, 1430. As already mentioned, Lincolnshire possesses a larger percentage of bells cast before the year 1600 than any of the other counties explored by Mr. North. The figures he gives are: Lincolnshire, 17½ per cent.; Rutland, 16; Leicestershire, 14¾; Northamptonshire, 10½; and Bedfordshire, 9 per cent.

Between the crosses and shields, and often between each word of the inscriptions, were stops of various kinds, single or complex, small hollow squares, coins of the period, or small crosses, plain or contained in shields. The inscriptions were in characters which it is a joy to behold—Lombardic, "stately Gothic," as North well describes them; uncials, or inch-high letters; and smaller black letter. This lettering, with its many abbreviations and contractions, is not always easy to decipher. Blunders made in cutting, letters misplaced or omitted, words mis-spelt, reversed or turned upside down in moulding, add to the difficulty. Then must be taken into account the dark places in which explorers have to grope and note these marks, to say nothing of the labour of getting there. For example, when North wrote in 1882, there were five bells dated 1662, and a priest's bell at Alga Kirk, in Lincolnshire, but they were never rung, and the only way of reaching them was by getting on the chancel roof, climbing thence on to the nave roof, and then crawling through a latticed window, too small to admit an adult.

Every letter in every word was sometimes stamped in large Gothic capitals, each enriched with foliage, emblematic birds, animals, human heads, or figures. Initial capitals must often have been a labour of love, bearing figures of saints, prelates, knights in armour, or grotesque devices, like the initial letters we see in some richly illuminated missal. Though he wrote of church bells in several other counties, Mr. North's affection seems to have been chiefly lavished on the bells of Lincolnshire. Singling out eleven 15th century bells there, he describes them as "the most interesting group yet recorded in England." They are found at South Somercotes (A.D. 1423) and Somerby, near Brigg, (1431). These, the earliest dated bells in the county, are not necessarily the oldest; they have more than once been mentioned in these pages. Other members of this group are at Beesby, Gunby St. Peter, Toynton St. Peter, Hainton, Hammeringham, and Somersby. The initial crosses and ornamental stops upon the bells at South Somercotes and Somerby are unusually fine, while the Gothic letters are enriched by figures of St. George spearing the dragon, a mitred bishop in rich vestments, foliage, sprigs of trefoil, emblems of the Trinity, and the oft-used emblem of the pelican feeding her young. Occasionally the inscription ran round the bell, the space being filled up when necessary by intervening stops, such as an acorn band, with an elegant border band towards the top and at the base of each bell. When the Roman characters were used, distinctness was reached, but the glory of the old lettering departed. The designs of these letters, and still more of the initial crosses and other ancient stamps, make one appreciate very highly the art of the period. After consultation, the two leading bell-experts, Mr. North and Mr. Stahlschmidt, were of opinion that the small black letter superseded the "stately Gothic" capitals about the year 1420.

Quite rightly, donors' names in some cases are prominently given, with their coats of arms, though modest benefactors are content with initials. Now come the inscriptions proper, always reverent and relevant to the bells' functions. In later times these inscriptions often ceased to be either. Upon the tenor, or largest bell, often appeared the name of the patron saint of the church; upon the smaller ones the names of saints whose altars were formerly in the church below, or who were the patrons of ancient Guilds or Confraternities in the parish. Lincolnshire examples are found in a "Jhesus" bell so inscribed at Haceonby; "Vocor Maria" (I am called Mary), at South Somercotes; "Vocor Andrea" (I am called Andrew), at Ingoldsby; and "Gabriel" at Branston. These early inscriptions, usually found upon the shoulder, are in Latin, the language of the mediæval Church. Other Lincolnshire bells, beautifully inscribed, are found at Claxby St. Mary (St. Martin); at Laceby ("Ista campana fit in Honore Sancti Augustini"). (This bell is made in honour of St. Augustine); and at Whitton 'Maria, Mater Dei, est Nomen Meum. (Mary, Mother of God, is my name).

Sometimes short ejaculatory prayers or invocations taken from the Litany are added to the Saint's name, as "Ora pro nobis." Many have, in whole or in part, the Angelic salutation, "Ave Maria Gracia Plena, Dominus Tecum Benedictam in Mulieribus,' part of which appears upon the Mary bell at St. Marie's, Sheffield, at Hartshorne, Derbyshire, Horkstow, Lincoln, and other places. Some Lincolnshire bells are stamped with the figures of the four Evangelists; others, as at Haxey and Wellingore, with figures of the Virgin and Child. Among other curious facts, North states that out of 353 Lincolnshire bells cast before 1600, 72 are dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and bear various inscriptions accordingly; 13 are inscribed to the Trinity; 19 to the Archangel Gabriel; 15 to St. John; 14 to St. Peter; 12 to St. Katherine; and six to the Archangel Michael.

Bell inscriptions may be roughly divided into three classes: First, those in Latin, which do not always denote old bells, because happily of late the old, appropriate inscriptions have often been revived upon new bells. In this class may be included the clever monkish verses indicating the various occasions on which each bell was rung. The second class consists of English inscriptions, which vary much in sentiment and taste. Sometimes these were placed, and probably composed, by donors;

sometimes attempts were made, without much success, to reproduce in English verse the strong, terse old Latin rhymes; less frequently than one could wish, a dedication was simply and reverently expressed. The names of incumbents and churchwardens now often appear. In the third class, that of founders' rhymes, composed apparently in the workshop, some try to be gay or humorous, others serious and impressive. A few are crude advertisements. This want of reverence is the more remarkable, as the Hedderleys, the Nottingham founders, and probably their predecessors, the Oldfields, in the 16th century, caused their workmen to assemble for prayer before running the metal into the mould. Examples of this belfry literature will follow. My materials are overwhelming, and I fear that some interesting local examples must be omitted. Compressing, as I must, from considerations of space, let me plead that our poor bells have not often the chance of telling their own story in print.

Here are some Latin inscriptions, chiefly local, often alternating with English mottoes in the same belfry:—"Multi Numerantur Amici" (Many friends are numbered), at Chesterfield, A.D. 1718. At Monyash and Newton Solney, Derbyshire, "Sca. Maria, O.P.N." (Holy Mary, pray for us). At Matlock, No. 5 bell (described by Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt as one of the oldest and most interesting in the country), at Morley and Cubley, and at Christ Church, York, the Saints thus evoked are St. Mary Magdalene, St. Andrew, St. Barbara, and St. Margaret. Aldborough, in the East Riding, has a bell, A.D. 1660, inscribed, "Stephanus Geere, Vicar vehemens, et S. Bartholomus, vox quasi tuba," apparently coupling a Vicar of vehement zeal with a Saint whose voice was like a trumpet. "Ecce ancilla Domini" (Behold the handmaid of the Lord) is on a bell at Brandesburton and many other churches. The following on a bell at Thornton Curtis, Lincolnshire, is supposed to be unique:—"O Deus absque Pare, Fac Nos Tibi dulce sonare" (O God without compare, make us sound sweetly in Thy praise). "Musica est Mentis Medicina" ((Music is as medicine to the Mind) is a not uncommon stamp. So is "Disce Mori Nostro Vivere disce sono" (Learn by our sound to live and to die); and "Non Clamor, sed Amor, cantat in Aure Dei" ((Not noisy contention, but Love, sounds sweetly in God's ear). It is hardly possible in translating to reproduce the Latin rhyme here, and in so many of these inscriptions, but the quaint old verse upon Tom of Oxford before its recasting in 1612, "In Thomæ laude, resono Bim Bom sine fraude," may be set in an English jingle, perhaps not much worse than the original:—In praise of Tom, I sound Bim Bom; 'Tis him I laud, And without fraud," that is, I suppose, whole heartedly, lustily, or faultlessly.

Great Tom at Lincoln bears the same inscription as now appears on its Oxford namesake, "Spiritus Sanctus a Patre et Filio Procedens Suaviter Sonans ad Salutem" (The Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, sounding sweetly unto salvation). The old Lady bells in the cathedral tower bore the following among other mottoes:—"Sum Rosa pulsata Mundi Maria Vocata" (When struck I am called Mary, the Rose of the World). This is a frequent inscription all over England, but the name is often varied with that of female Saints, especially Katharine. "Soli Deo Gloria in Excelsis" (To God alone be glory in the highest); "Cum Voce sonora Thomasi campana laudet" (With loud voice shall this bell sing in praise of St. Thomas); "In Multis Annis, resonat campana Johannis" (For many years may this bell sound in praise of St. John). The Jesus bell at Hartington has "Det Sonitum Plenum Jesus et Modulamen Amenum," which may be freely rendered, "May Jesus give forth a sound both full and musical." I must leave more of these Latin inscriptions to my next chapter.

X.—LATIN INSCRIPTIONS ON BELLS.

CONTINUE some of the Latin inscriptions found on church bells in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Lincoln, and Notts, regretting that the county first-named has not yet had a chronicler like North, Jewitt, or Cox. "Ut Mundus, sic Nos, Nunc Lætitiam, nunc Dolorem" (Bourn, Lincolnshire, A.D., 1729) is a happy reminder that, as in the World, so in the Belfry, Joy alternates with Grief. "Merorem mæstis, Letis sic leta, sonabo" is of like effect (Sadness will I sound to the sad, joy to the joyful). No. 5 bell at Baslow, "Sit Nomen I.H.C. Benedictum" (Blessed be Jesu's Name), has for its companion one marked "The Duke of Rutland's Gift," 1754. The donor was John Manners, third Duke and eleventh Earl of Rutland, born 1696, and died 1779, aged 83. At Winster, No. 5 bell also records as its benefactors the Dukes of Devonshire and Rutland. Further instances of gifts towards bells from the same ducal families will appear hereafter. At Bonsall and on one of the eight old bells at Chesterfield (recast in 1819) was inscribed "Laus Domini Nostra Mobilitate Viget" (By our movement the Lord's praise increases). Friskney's five bells, all dated 1719, are successively marked "Melodiam Ordior" "Magistro et Discipulis"; "Laborem signo et Requiem"; "Fideles voco ad Domum Dei"; "Vitam Metior, Mortem Ploro." ("I lead off the Melody"; "To the Master and His Disciples"; "I give the signal for Labour and for Rest," in allusion to the bell for early matins and for vespers or curfew; "I call the Faithful to the House of God"; "I measure Life, I mourn for Death.")

Dronfield's first bell is marked "Vigilate et Orate" (Watch and Pray), a frequent inscription, sometimes, as at Lincoln, with the addition "Nescitis enem quando tempus sit" (For you know not when the time may be); its fifth, as at Haxey, Lincoln, "Hæc Campana Beata Trinitate Sacra Fiat" (May this bell be blessed by the Holy Trinity); its sixth (A.D. 1615), "Nos sumus constructi ad Laudem Domini" (We are made for the praise of God). No. 1 bell at Stretton-en-le-Fields says:—

> Cum sono, si non vis venire,
> Nunquam ad preces cupies ire.

(When I ring, if you come not, never will you wish to go to pray.) Tideswell, described by Jewitt as one of the largest and most interesting churches in Derbyshire, has one mediæval bell marked "Missi de Cœlis, Habeo Nomen Gabrielis" (I bear the name of Gabriel, sent from Heaven), and another "Cantate Domino Canticum Novum" (O sing unto the Lord a new song). Hathersage, which possesses six bells, one dating from 1617, owes one of these to a member of the old family of Bagshawe, whose arms it bears. The Sanctus bell, much older, has a Latin inscription (some words contracted), "Pray for the souls of Robert Eyr, and of Joan, his wife," with the arms of Padley and Eyre. One of the Eyre family fought at Agincourt, and is said to have contributed largely to the building of Hathersage Church, where he is buried. At Sproatley, in the East Riding, by "Campana beati Suvithvini," the bell proclaims its dedication to St. Swithwyn. At Patrington a mixture of English and Latin makes the much-sought-after jingle, "In Weale and Woe, Laudes Deo." Humbleton, in Holderness, and Alkborough, Lincoln, have "Ut Tuba, sic sonitu conduco cohortes" (As with the sound of trumpet, I bring together the hosts of the Lord). The silver trumpets of the Levites are indicated in this and other like inscriptions.

Occasionally, as at Deeping St. James, Lincoln, the inscription distinguishes between pre-Reformation and modern use of bells:—"Non sono animabus* mortuorum sed auribus viventium" ("I ring not for the souls of the dead, but for the ears of the living"), that is, to admonish them of their duty. Of the three pre-Reformation bells at Haxey, one has just been noticed. The Angelus bears the words "Personet hæc cœlis dulcissima vox Gabrielis" (May this most sweet voice of Gabriel re-echo through the Heavens). The same inscription is found at Belton, Killingholme, Sedgbrook, and other places. Grantham, which possesses a priest's bell A.D. 1674, has a fine ring of ten bells, most of them appropriately inscribed. None is older than 1752. One is marked "Cœlorum Christe, Placeat Tibi Rex Sonus Iste" (O Christ, King of Heaven, may this sound be pleasing to Thee!). Grimsby, which has eight bells, six of them cast in 1830, bears the same beautiful words. So does a bell at Haxey.

One of Horncastle's six bells teaches cheerfulness, "Dum spiras, spera" (While thou hast breath, have hope). Another rouses the slumberer, "Lectum

* Monkish Latin.

fuge, discute somnum" (Flee thy couch, cast off sleep). A third says, "Exeat e busto, Auspice Christo" (May he rise from the tomb, Christ being his Helper). Another, "Omnibus sono placere" (I sound to please all). Among other inscriptions may be noted:—"Templa petas supplex et venerare Deum" (Seek the Temple and worship there as a suppliant); and to the same effect, at Horncastle, "Supplicem Deus audit" (God hears the suppliant); "Hæc in Conclave, Gabriel, nunc pange suave" (In this assembly, Gabriel, now sing sweetly); "Tintinnitus rapidos scintillans spargo per auras" (I scatter, sparkling through the air, my rapid sounds); "Me resonare jubet Pietas, Mors, grata Voluptas" (In turn piety, death, pleasure bid me resound); "Dies die eructat Verbum" (Day unto day uttereth speech). "Beatus est populus qui exaudit clangorem" (Happy the people who hear and profit by my sound). "Campana audite: Voco Vos ad sacra Venite" (Hear the bell: Come when I call you to sacred things). "Non Vox, sed Votum; non musica cordula, sed Cor" (Not voice, but vow; not the musical chord, but the heart). "Surge, Age" (Arise, act). "Grata sit arguta Resonans Campanula voce" (May the little bell sound pleasantly, with clear tone). "Voco; Veni precare," puts in shortest compass "I call; come to pray." "Suscito voce Pios, Tu Jesv dirige Mentes" (With my voice I arouse the pious; do Thou, O Jesu, direct their minds!).

"Statutum est semel Omnibus Mori" (It is appointed unto all men once to die) is a lesson often taught in belfries in varied terms. "Vox mea est dulcis, mea scintillans vultus" (Sweet is my voice and bright my face) may apply to a new bell, but the shining face must soon disappear. "Virgo coronata, duc nos ad Regna beata" (O crowned Virgin, lead us to the blessed realms). Quite a recent bell, only 30 years old, at Great Grimsby, records a visitation there, "Voce mea laudo Dominum pro peste fugata. Hic ægris animis, Christe, medere precor" (With my voice I praise God for pestilence expelled. I pray Thee, O Christ, here to heal sick souls.) An historical event is set forth at length in Latin—that, after a 20 years' war, peace was made between Anne, Queen of England, and Louis XIV., King of France, in the year of our salvation, 1713. Matlock's third bell, 1718, declares that Heaven will reward its benefactors ("Remunerabit Cœlum benefactoribus Meis"). At St. John's, Penistone, No. 1 bell, founded at Rotherham by J. Ludlam in 1756, is inscribed "Venite, exultemus Domino" (Come, let us sing unto the Lord); No. 2, bearing the coat of arms of the donor, De Gunthwaite, on each side of the shoulder, "Te Deum Laudamus," A.D. 1714; No. 5, an inscription which I have not noted elsewhere, "Protege, Virgo pia, quos convoco Sancta Maria" (Protect, O blessed Virgin Mary, those whom I call together). "Omnibus sono placere" (noted at Horncastle) is repeated on a bell at Barrow-on-Humber, cast by Seller, of York, in 1713. Of the six bells here, dating from 1636 downwards, North writes:—"Considering that they are all of different dates, and by two or three different founders, and that two or three of them appear defective, for the tenor is not of the same thickness all the way round, it is remarkable that this ring has long enjoyed the reputation of being the best in North Lincolnshire. It probably owes much to its situation on the banks of the Humber."

There are some famous monkish lines which set forth the functions of church bells. They are printed in an old volume published in London, A.D. 1663, but are certainly of much older date, and probably first came to us from foreign sources. The rhymes in each line are cleverly sustained, and sound not unlike the clash and clangour of the bells themselves:—

En ego Campana, nunquam denuntio vana;
Laudo Deum verum, Plebem voco, congrego Clerum;
Defunctos plango, vivos voco, fulmina frango;
Vox mea, vox vitæ, voco vos ad Sacra venite;
Sanctos collaudo, tonitrua fugo, funera claudo;
Funera plango, fulgura frango, Sabbatha pango;
Excito lentos, dissipo ventos, paco cruentos.

It would be hardly possible to reproduce in English the same meaning within the same compass. Here is a rough translation:—"Lo, I, the bell, never give tongue uselessly. I praise the true God, call the people, summon the clergy, mourn for the dead (ploro sometimes replaces plango), appeal to the living, and break the lightning's shock. Come at my voice, the voice of life, minding you of sacred duties. I give praise with the devout, drive off the thunder, tell the close of life, toll at funerals, shatter thunderbolts, mark the Sabbath, waken the slothful, disperse hurricanes, and make gentle the cruel." All over England and the Continent church bells bear inscriptions containing parts of these lines. Sometimes there are variants of the Latin words; sometimes with us they are translated into English couplets, not always happily. Here is an old version, and one of the best, of part of the original Latin, preserving the rhyme in each half-line:—

Men's death I tell by doleful knell.
Lightning and thunder I break asunder.
On Sabbath all to church I call.
The sleepy head I raise from bed.
The Winds so fierce I do disperse.
Men's cruel rage I doe assuage.

Among local examples of Latin variants, that of Friskney, "Vitam metior, mortem ploro," has already been given. Bells at Grimsby and Horbling follow the original. Brant Broughton has "Defunctos ploro, festa decoro" (I mourn the dead, I grace festivities). Darley Dale, A.D. 1710, has "Sacra clango, Gaudia pango, Funera plango" (I sound at ceremonies, celebrate rejoicings, and mourn at funerals). Of English couplets reproducing the text there are many local

examples. I give one found at Chapel-en-le-Frith, Castleton, Hayfield, Southwell (Notts), and many other places:—

I to the Church the living call.
And to the Grave do summon all.

After the Reformation, the beautiful initial cross for the most part disappeared on new bells, and many of the old Latin inscriptions were defaced or erased by hammer and chisel, as savouring of Popery. English mottoes are now more usual than Latin. I give a few local instances, however, where Latin mottoes were retained on new bells or those re-cast, the two languages being generally mixed in the belfry. Barrow-on-Trent has two interesting bells, which appear to be those mentioned in the inventory of Church goods in 1557, when there were "iij bells in ye steple." One of these is inscribed "Ave Maria," the other, "Sancta Elena," in highly ornamental lettering. All Saints', High Hoyland, has six bells, five of which are dated 1745, with the following inscriptions:—No. 2, "Gloria in Altissimis Deo" (Glory to God in the Highest); No. 3, "Te Deum Laudamus"; No. 4, "Cum sono busta mori, cum pulpit (? pulpita) vivere disco"; No. 5, "Cantemus Domino" (Let us sing unto the Lord); and No. 6, "Incipe Musa Prior." The copying of Nos. 4 and 5 supplied to me seems faulty, though the former may mean "When I toll at burials, learn to die; when the preacher admonishes, learn to live." These five bells were cast by Seller, of York, famed as a founder for the fine tones he produced. All Saints', Silkstone, also possesses six bells. No. 1, stamped "I.H.S." (Jesus, Saviour of Men"), with initials of one of the Hedderley founders; No. 2, "Canticum novum cantate" (Sing a new song); the founder was Seller; No. 3, "Laudate Dominum cymbalis sonoris" (Praise the Lord with loud sounding cymbals), A.D., 1718; No. 4, "Soli Deo Gloria" (Glory be to God alone), 1638; No. 5, "Dei Miserere Me" (God have mercy upon me), 1626; No. 6, "Venite exultemus Domino" (Come let us sing unto the Lord), A.D., 1674.

XI.—POETICAL INSCRIPTIONS ON BELLS.

LEAVING the short, simple, and devout inscriptions in Latin prose or verse with which our ancestors were content, we come, after a too short transition period, to a degenerate age, when our poor bells were stamped with English prose or verse, which too often was flippant or downright silly. I will first give some examples which are free from these defects.

One of the earliest undated inscriptions in English, before Latin had fallen into disuse, occurs at Alkborough, Lincoln. It has the initial cross; the lettering is of Gothic capitals, with ornamental stops between each word:—

Jesv: For: Vi: Modir: Sake:
Save: All: Ye: Sovls: That: Me: Gart: Make.

Gart is a word not found in many dictionaries, and appears to be an old form used in Lowland Scotch and in our northern English speech. It is the preterite of "gar," to make or compel, but here bears its secondary meaning of "prepared." Gart is found in Ramsay's "Tea-table Miscellany" (A.D. 1733):—

My dady was harsh, my minny was worse,
That gart him gae 'yont the sea;

and in Burns's "Tam O'Shanter":—

He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl.

Still more to the purpose is a quaint entry in an old parish record at Louth, which describes the placing on the steeple there of a weathercock, A.D. 1515, and its hallowing by the parish priest and many of his brethren. "And then the said priests sang Te Deum Laudamus, with organs; and the kirk-wardens garred ring all ye bells, and caused all ye people there being to have bread and ale. And all to the loving of God, our Lady, and All Saints. Amen!"

Unusual and purely secular, yet with an obvious religious application, is a motto at Semperingham—"Be Not Over Busie." At North Witham is the encouraging motto, "Hope Well, Have Well!" obviously a pithy version of a Latin motto I have already quoted. There is a quaint inscription on a bell at Fandish, Beds. 1597), "Cum, Cum And Pra." An old bell at Gunby St. Nicholas, Lincs., is marked "In ye Name of ye Trinitye, Nicolas Bel men call me." Crofton, Yorks., "In God is All, quod (quoth) Gabriel." One bell dedicated to St. Michael says, "I laud in holy tones Him who broke the sceptre of the dragon." The so-called Sermon bell of Ancaster Church says:—

I will sounde and resounde unto Thy people, O Lord,
With my sweet voice to call them to Thy word:

and a similar bell in Northamptonshire:—

I ring to sermon with a lusty bome,
That all may come and none may stay at home.

So at Kelstern, A.D. 1607, the old inscription runs:

When we three bells together be toll'd,
Make hast to the Churche both young and olde.

"Prosperity to the Church of England" was a common sentiment, thus expressed on the bells of Southwell, Gayton (Lincs) (1726), and elsewhere in other forms, as at Alfreton, at Leake, and at Westborough, Lincs. (1751-2):—"The Churches prayse I sound alwayes," where the old monkish jingle is successfully imitated. Old-fashioned Conservative Churchmen made their protest in a unique motto upon two bells, A.D. 1760, now hanging at Welwyn and Little Wymondley in Hertfordshire. About this time, it may be remembered, John Wesley was doing his best to stir up the then apathetic clergy and laity. Either the founders or donors clearly disapproved of Wesley's energy and the spirit of warm devotion he inspired. So this legend is stamped on the bells:—"Prosperity to the Church of England. No encouragement to Enthusiasm." "God save His Church" is the simple prayer on the oldest bell at Heanor, A.D. 1634. "For Church and King I always ring" is upon a bell (1769), formerly at Edensor Church, and now attached to the clock at Chatsworth, the Duke of Devonshire having replaced four bells by six, new and recast, when Edensor Church was rebuilt in 1867.

Perhaps the favourite early English inscription was that of "Jhesus Be Our Spede." It is met with, as early as 1590, upon a bell at Hault Hucknall, Derbyshire, stamped in fine Lombardic capitals, and occurs on three bells at Eyam (1628-59), three at Mellor (1615-39), and two at Twyford (1611). It was upon one of the old bells at Chesterfield, cast in 1774 by Thomas Hilton, of Wath. No. 2 bell at Hemsworth (A.D. 1726), the tenor bell at St. Peter's, Felkirk, and bells at Mickleover, North and South Kelsey, Barton-upon-Humber, and other local churches also bear this motto. The Handsworth bell, and some others elsewhere, including John Bunyan's bell at Elstow, Beds, are stamped with letters of the alphabet, a senseless decoration, if meant as such, reminding one of the almost forgotten girls' samplers of former days, but sometimes relieved by marks of roses, fleur-de-lis, the Tudor portcullis, and other ornaments. A bell at Brigsley, Lincolnshire, dated 1674, is inscribed "If God Be With Vs Ho can be" (Against Us.),—remarkable for the omission of "W" in who, which agrees with the local pronounciation, and also occurs on a bell at Newton-on-Trent, and many local gravestones.

Death is naturally a frequent topic in the belfry, remembering how great a part one of the bells has always played at that common crisis. The Jesus bell, used before the Reformation as the Passing bell, and then for the knell after death, bears many a solemn motto. At Alfreton (1627), Halifax, and several Lincolnshire parishes, including Boston, North Coates, Fotherby, Londonthorpe, Fenton, Claypole, Caythorpe, Owston, Ackworth, South Kirby, Hogsthorpe, Owston, Ancaster, and Crowle, with dates from 1604 down to 1808, the bells thus admonish us:—

All ye that heare my mournful sound,
Repent before you lye in ground.

Or, as at Castleton and Bakewell (1798):—

When of departed hours we toll the knell,
Instruction take, and spend the future well.

Another Bakewell bell is more technical, and says in ringers' terms:—

Through grandsires and triples with pleasure men range,
Till Death calls the bob, and brings on the last change.

A Kentish bell, Tekham (1641), has the following:—

Lord Jesus Christ reseve each Sol.
For whome this Bell shall ever tol.

Shorter admonitions occur on many Lincolnshire death bells. At Cromby (1687), "When you die, aloud I cry"; at Cleethorpes, Candlesbury, and Addlethorpe, simply "Remember Death"; at Croft, "Prepare to Die."

No. 7 bell at Heanor has this verse:—

I tole the tvne that dvlfvl is
To suche as livd anisse:
But sweete my sownde seems unto them
Who hope for joifvll bliss.

Elsewhere the lines are varied, No. 6 bell at Matlock adopting them in the following form:—

I toll the knell that dismal is
Unto all such as live amiss
But unto those that liveth well
I toll thear wel come Passing bell.

At West Keal there is this admonition:—

To speak a parting soul is given to me:
Be trimmed thy Lamp as if I tolled for thee.

At Ashover and at Ancaster the sentiment takes this form:—

My roaringe sound doth warning give
That men cannot heare alwayes live.

A homely couplet, indeed, akin to another upon an Ashover bell (A.D. 1625):—

I, sweetly tolling, men do call
To taste of meats that feede the soule.

This is also found at Melbourne, Barton-on-Humber, and other places. An old Ashover bell, one record tells, "rang the downfall of Bonaparte, and broke, April, 1814." This momentous announcement was too much for it. Many of your readers, visitors to this pretty Derbyshire village, must have listened with keen pleasure to these bells as their sound floats upwards from the valley to the hills which overhang it.

Wedding peals are naturally suggestive to all belfry poets, though some, as at Bakewell, temper bliss with dole:—

When men in Hymen's bands unite
Our merry peals produce delight.
But when death goes his dreary rounds
We send forth sad and solemn sounds.

Or announce in one verse all the mixed duties of bells, as at Alfreton (1780) and Thornton Curtis (1761):—

The praise of God I sing
And triumph of the King;
The marriage joys I tell
And toll the dead man's knell.

Somewhat better expressed on another bell:—

The fleeting hours I toll,
I summon all to pray;
I toll the funeral knell,
I hail the festal day.

In other cases marriage is treated without any sad admixture:—

The bride and groom we greet
In holy wedlock join'd;
Our sounds are emblems sweet
Of hearts in love combined.

This is also the genial tone adopted at Knaresborough (1777), Boston, Gainsborough, and other Lincoln belfries, including Swineshead, Brant Broughton, and Timberland:—

In wedlock's bands all ye who join
With hands your hearts unite;
So shall our tuneful tongues combine
To laud the nuptial rite.

So at Kirton-in-Holland and Hogsthorpe:—

When Female Virtue weds with Manly Worth
We catch the Rapture and we spread it forth.

A high poetic strain indeed! Yet hardly equal to No. 4 bell at Hitchin (1762), which bubbles over with sentiment:—"We the Sacred Nuptial Tie joyous proclaim; and every sound and every peal calls Smiles of Transport from the Happy Pair"; which ought to have been poetry, but isn't. My readers by this time have probably heard enough of these belfry transports.

Patriotism accounts for many inscriptions, especially on bells hung during the great wars of the 18th and early 19th centuries. On a church bell at Fowey, Cornwall (A.D. 1764), are impressions from a medal struck in the reign of George II. to commemorate the victories of Quebec, Crown Point, Lagos, Minden, Guadeloupe, and Niagara. The names of Wolfe, Amherst, Boscawen, and other commanders are given, with a laureated bust of George II. and the motto, "Perfidia Eversa."

Loyal rhymes are frequent. Thus at Halifax:—

When Britons are with laurels crowned
We'll make the hills and vales resound.

At Kirton-in-Holland (1807) there is the same couplet, with an addition:—

May Peace return to bless Britannia's shore,
And Faction fall to raise its head no more.

A vain hope, I fear, not realised even in our own time. Similar loyal devotion is seen at Bakewell (1798):—

When victory crowns the public weal
With glee we give the merry peal

Edenbridge, Kent (1807), has:—

Should battle rage and hostile foes contend
We hail the victor when he's Britain's friend.
May Peace and Plenty smile on Albion's shore
And War's dire tumult cease for evermore.

"God save the King" is a common bell motto. Occasionally parochial loyalty was more specific. Thus at Bottesford, Lincs., A.D., 1710, we find, "'God save Queen Ann"; and at Kirton-in-Holland and Hogsthorpe (1807-8):—

May George long reign who now the sceptre sways,
And British valour ever rule the seas.

A couplet admirable in sentiment, but halting as to rhyme. Lincoln (1593), Orston, Notts (1599), and Hougham, Lincs. (1618), have the following excellent inscription:—"God save the Church, our King, and Realme, And send us Peace through Christ." A Halifax bell says:—

Feare God and Honour the King,
For obedience is a vertuous thing.

But the belfry occasionally warred against slavish obedience, for a bell at Whilton, North Hants, proclaims:—"Monarchy without Tyranny"; and considering the period (1777), this constitutional reservation was not unnecessary. A bell at Bexley, Kent, (1763) tells the powers that be:—

Ye Rulers that are Put in Trust,
To Judge of Wrong and Right,
Be All your Judgments Trūe and Just,
Regarding no Man's Might.

And while, when the memory of Gunpowder Treason and Plot was fresh, Owmby, Lincs., inscribed on its bell (1687), "Let us remember the 5th of November," I take a curious inscription embodying quite different views from a bell at Witham-on-the-Hill, in the same county, so lately as 1831:—

'Twas not to prosper pride or hate
William Augustus Johnson gave me,
But peace and joy to celebrate.
And call to prayer to heaven to save ye.
Then keep the terms, and e'er remember,
May 29th ye must not ring,
Nor yet the 5th of each November,
Nor on the coming of a King.

Presumably W. A. J., the donor of this bell, must have had strong Republican opinions, and gave it upon conditions expressed in verse which is hard to beat for doggerel bathos. On the other hand, Bedford shows a singular instance of loyalist devotion, a bell there, dated 1650, being inscribed, "God Save the King!" though the Commonwealth was declared May 19, 1649. As some of the letters are placed upside down, it is suggested that this was a device to evade observation: but in the moulding these errors frequently occur.

Some belfries are rich in moral reflections. This is especially so at Bakewell, where the bells read us lessons which seem to have even a political bearing. First, one calls on mankind to imitate their spirit of concord:—

Would men, like me, join and agree,
They'd live in tuneful harmony.

Another, which leads off the peal, draws the same moral:—

When I begin our merry din
This band I lead from discord free;
And for the fame of human name,
May every leader copy me.

But then the big bell speaks, and in a voice full of conscious dignity and authority, ends with reflections almost profound:—

Possessed of deep, sonorous tone,
This Belfry King sits on his throne.
And when the merry bells go round,
Adds to and mellows every sound

So, in a just and well-poised State,
Where all degrees possess due weight,
One greater power of greater tone
Is ceded to improve their own.

This eminently monarchical sentiment may be contrasted with the rather sour Republicanism of William Augustus Johnson. Yet, as though upon fuller consideration, Bakewell bells seem conscious of infirmities, which they, too, share with us unmetallic mortals, for one of them sadly confesses:—

Mankind, like us, too oft are found
Possessed of nought but empty sound.

A similarly humiliating admission is made by a bell at Kirton-in-Holland.

Some of my readers may like to know of this bell inscription at Chertsey:—"Angela Burdett Coutts, whom God preserve, named me 'Shoshannim,' at whose expense I was re-cast, A.D., 1859." A Jewish acquaintance tells me that "Shoshannim" means in Hebrew "Roses"; the word occurs frequently in the Song of Solomon.

XII.—MORE INSCRIPTIONS: HUMOROUS AND PRACTICAL.

CYNIC might find ample scope for disagreeable comment in the inscriptions placed upon bells both by donors and founders. "Let Parker's liberal deed be known to ages yet unborn" seems what is now vulgarly known as "a large order." It occurs on a bell at Halifax, and the "ages yet unborn" are limited no doubt to the acreage of the parish or borough, whatever this may be. Even then—but the subject is not worth pursuing. As something pure and unadulterated in verse and sentiment I like the following:—

Ring, boyes, and keep awake,
For Mr. William Henchman's sake.

I won't mention the donor's parish; it is not in our home counties. After this high poetic strain, "Long life and prosperity to our worthy subscribers" sounds tame; at least it does not err by blowing the trumpet of fame too shrilly. Much more modest are the lines:—

At proper times our voices we will raise
In sounding to our benefactor's praise.

Tho poetry, composed in 1777, is prim and stiff, but the self-restraint by which the donor remains unknown to all the ages must be commended.

Founders, as I have said, have done their best, and worst, to spoil the romance of bells by foolish inscriptions. Quite inoffensive is the notice—

If you would know when we was run,
It was March the twenty-second, 1701.

Most people would have preferred this statement in prose; at all events it supplies a date for history. But the name, the name! To preserve this is the common interest. Now, there could be no objection to a simple record of a founder's style and date, which are indeed valuable for future reference. But why should a poor innocent bell, which cannot protect itself, be allowed by Rectors or Vicars, its proper guardians, to be defaced by such stuff as this:—

Be yt knowne to all that doe me see
That Newcombe, of Leicester, made me.

Some excuse there may be in the early date of this doggerel, 1603. I can offer no excuse for the two which follow:—

Lambert made me weake, not fit to ring:
Bartlet, among the rest, did make me sing.

Badgworth ringers they were mad,
Because Rigbie had made me bad:
But Abel Rudhall you may see
Hath made me better than Rigbie.

I hope the law of libel does not run into this century, so as to fix upon the "Telegraph," through my

means, this grave injury to Lambert's and Rigbie's reputation. Our not very remote neighbours at Louth can point, though not with pride, to this verse on one of their bells (1726):—

According to our sound
Let Hedderley's fame serround.

Poetry here is on a par with spelling. These famous Nottingham founders should have been above such pettiness. It may be mentioned here that they were in business at Chesterfield, Bawtry, and Derby before settling at Nottingham, and that Daniel Hedderley, who flourished early in the eighteenth century, supplied nearly 80 bells for Lincolnshire churches alone. One of his inscriptions in the Westborough belfry (1752) is surely indiscreet:—

Tho' Hedderley made us all,
Good luck attend us all.

Which sounds like the language of despair:—"Everything is against us, we know, considering where we came from. We must trust to good luck rather than good work." Very different is the tone of defiance and certain ultimate triumph in the next (1725):—

Pull on brave boys! I'm metal to the back,
And I'll be hanged before I ever crack.

On a Cornish bell (North Tamerton, 1830), good intention is clear, though the founders advertise themselves too flagrantly:—

Let bells, said many, go to wreck;
Baily and Bray said nay;
We love our God, His House to deck,
And hear His cymbals play.

Self-assertion and self-praise are allowed to some bells. "When we doe ring, we sweetly sing," or "I mean to make it understood, that though I'm little yet I'm good" (a common form), or again, as at South Witham:

All tho my voice be shrill and small,
I shall be heard aloud to call,

varied in other places to a still more sturdy boast, "I shall be heard above you all." "You cannot be merry without me" is a frequent boast, varied by—

If you have a judicious ear
You'll own my voice is sweet and clear.

"Musica est mentis medicina" ("Music is as medicine for the mind") is expanded from the Latin into many forms:—

Such wondrous power to music's given,
It elevates the soul to Heaven.

In a Cornish belfry (St. Austell, 1810) each of the eight bells has a line in praise of the divine art:—

1. By music minds an equal temper know,
2. Nor swell too high nor sink too low.
3. Music the fiercest Grief can charm,
4. And Fate's severest Rage disarm.
5. Music can soften Pain to Ease,
6. And make Despair and Madness cease.
7. Our Joys below it can Improve,
8. And antedate the Bliss above.

Sometimes bells thank their ringers (Bromley, Kent, 1773):—

The ringers' art our grateful notes prolong;
Apollo listens and approves the song.

Or, like four bells at St. Kew, in Cornwall, admonish them:—

1. Keep attentively your time.
2. Every Sabbath mind to chime.
3. Ring changes oft in proper season.
4. Never drink to hurt your reason.

The advice in the last line is more strongly expressed at Grantham and elsewhere:—

Ye ringers all who prize
Your health and happiness,
Be merry, sober, wise,
And you'll the same possess.

Local poets have not been wanting to write disparagingly of neighbouring bells, and praise their own in comparison. Thus, in Lincolnshire, we read of "Marton's cracked pancheons and Torksey's egg-shells; Saxilby's ding-dongs, and Stow Mary bells." While Notts sings to the same tune—"Colston's cracked pancheons, Screveton's egg-shells, Bingham's two rollers, Whatton's merry bells." Similar doggerel reproaches, in many parishes, as at Hatton, Owersby, and Holbeach, Lincolnshire, "the wicked people," who "sold the bells to build the steeple," or who, as at Segsby, in the same county, are content with "a wooden steeple." Boston is condemned on other grounds:—"Boston! Boston! What hast thou to boast on? High Steeple, proud people, And shoals men are lost on."

Perhaps the first prize for batbos must be given to a poet at Leybourn, Dorset, where what is there known as the fire bell, dated 1652, is made to say:—"Lord! Quench this furious flame. Arise, run, help, put out the same." The first line an invocation; the second, one hopes, a call on more mundane influences.

With some sense of relief, I now pass from these rude specimens of verse to a few selections from notes sent by correspondents, or gleaned from other sources. At Southwell, Notts, I am informed, a fire in 1711 destroyed the old bells. The existing ring was cast in 1721 by Abraham or Abel Ruddall, or Rudhall, of Gloucester, whose bells are better than the lettering which, as we have just seen, he was sometimes allowed to place upon them. At Southwell, however, the inscriptions are short and harmless enough. "Peace and good neighbourhood," "Prosperity to this town," "To our benefactors," "To the Chapter," "To the Church of England." No. 5 is stamped, "From lightning and tempest, Good Lord deliver us." St. Peter's Church, Nottingham, has a ring of eight bells, recast in 1771. Two of these were given by ringers, "the Society of Northern Youths," in 1672, and were recast in 1771, at the cost of the "Sherwood Youths." Both bells are inscribed accordingly. No. 7 was formerly stamped in black letter, "Ave Maria. Of your charitie pray for the sole of Margere Dubbylday,"

but when the bell was recast this appeal was changed to "I was given by Margery Dubbleday in 1554." This donor was a washerwoman, and by her will in 1554 left rents of 20s. yearly to the sexton on condition of his ringing the bell every morning, at 4 a.m., except on Sundays, to summon the washerwomen of the town to their work. The bell is still rung for about three months of the year at 6 a.m.

At Heanor one bell was recast, and the ring increased from five to eight, in 1902, so that the total weight of metal in the belfry is now 56cwt. 2qrs. 19lbs. The dedication service took place in December of that year. All the inscriptions are in good taste, and the days for such wretched, unseemly rhymes as have just been given are gone, I hope, never to return. What has been done lately in the Heanor, Haxey, and other belfries affords excellent examples of that local pride in our church bells which I hope is now growing, and is altogether to be striven for and commended.* At Darfield a local tradition is that two of the old bells formerly came from Beauchief Abbey, bearing the inscriptions: "Ut campana bene sonat, Sanctus Antonius monet" (St. Anthony enjoins the bell to sound well), and "In multis annis resonet campana Johans" (May this bell, John, sound loudly for many years). Brigg possesses eight bells, all modern, dating 1875-8. Six of these reached the town in 1876, and were received with much rejoicing. There was an interesting dedication service, and later in the year, when the bells were hung, a company of ringers from the Sheffield Parish Church rang several "touches," the late Rev. Dr. Gatty, Vicar of Ecclesfield, preaching an appropriate sermon.

Some founders had favourite inscriptions which they often repeated The Norris family, Stamford founders during the 17th century, used these: "Multi vocati, Pauci electi" (Many are called, few are chosen), and "Cum voco, ad ecclesiam venite" (Come to church when I call); good examples which I wish had been more often imitated by other founders. Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt traced the records of another old firm, the Heathcotes, who were bell-founders in Chesterfield during the 15th century, and long afterwards. Godfrey Heathcote in 1610 recast an old bell for Wirksworth. In the agreement, still preserved, he undertakes to "uphold the said bell soleme, sound, sweete, and tunable for a year and a day" after delivery; "or else to reforme the same to become tunable and sounde, and to agree in good musicke with the rest of the bells of the said churche."

The Ashbourne inventory of bells in the reign of Edward VI. includes "iij bellez in ye steple, i clocke ofer i of them, i broken bell, i lyttle bell called a sanctus bell, ii handbelles, and ii saeryng bellez hangyng before the aulter of grene." Ashbourne now has eight bells, dated 1815, with inscriptions of no special interest, except this:—"Cast in the year 1815, in which the great battle of Waterloo was fought." At Wirksworth, the earliest dated bells in the ring of eight are five cast in 1702, the tenor bearing the coat of arms of the senior churchwarden at the time, Mr. Michael Burton, of Holmesfield, Dronfield, D.L. These five were recast from older bells, with an increased weight of metal; the cost, £334, was raised by a levy of £220 and "a generous subscription of £114." Among the subscribers is Sir Philip Gell, Bart. (Gell is the name of a well-known family in the High Peak of Derbyshire; hence our "Gell" Street, Sheffield). Other subscribers are Lady Gray, Sir Nath. Curzon, Bart., and Messrs. Carter, Sacheverell, Gilbert, Munday, Barnes, Hayward, Greaves, Berrisford, and Wigley.

At Glossop there are eight modern bells, of which five were cast by James Harrison, of Barton-on-Humber, in 1815-16. In the belfry a tablet dated March 13, 1858, records the ringing of a peal of Kent Treble Bob Majors, with 7,040 changes, in 4 hours 9 minutes. Another tablet states that in November, 1863, a similar peal of 5,280 changes was rung to the memory of Ald. Cubitt, chairman of the Cotton Famine Committee, and formerly Lord Mayor of London, a native of Glossop. Local history is often similarly perpetuated in the belfry Thus at Staveley, where there are eight bells, two bear record that they were given by the parishioners and Rector "on William the Marquis of Hartington coming of age, May 21, 1811." This Rector, Mr. Gisborne, was a liberal benefactor, and gave the eighth bell in 1782. The fourth, bearing the same date, is inscribed:—

> While thus we join in cheerful sound
> May love and loyalty abound.

No. 7, also of 1782, bears precise details of its birth:—"The Duke of Devonshire gave £56 for recasting the first five bells. The parish bore all other expenses." A bell at Hope, one of six, has some of the lettering incised, that is, cut into the bell with a chisel. The main inscription "Soli Deo Gloria in Excelsis," and date, 1733, is as usual, in raised letter. Another bell, also of 1733, bears the arms of the Duke of Devonshire under the inscription:—

> Our sounding is to each a call
> To serve the Lord both great and small.

This inscription, slightly varied, is also on a bell at Barton-upon-Humber. The late Mr. Llewellyn Jewitt, whose labours in recording and preserving our local and general antiquities deserve to be held in grateful memory, prints in the "Reliquary," which he edited, the original agreement for casting the Hope ring. It purports to be between Daniel Hedderley, of Bawtry, bell-founder, and John

*In April of this year (1903) the bells of Cobham (Surrey) parish church, which had been recast and rehung, were dedicated at a special service. A new tenor bell, weighing half a ton, had been added to commemorate the Coronation, and the bell bears medallion portraits of the King and Queen, with the inscription, "God bless King Edward VII., crowned August 9, 1902."

Hawksworth, of Stunyserlow, Yorkshire, lead merchant, of the one part, and the Hope churchwardens of the other part, and recites that the four existing bells, "being very much decayed and out of tune," and the parishioners in general meeting assembled being willing that the same should be recast, and the number made up to five, Hedderley and his associate agree to perform this work, being paid 20s. per cwt. for recasting the metal of the old bells, and £6 10s. per cwt. for all fresh metal required; the five bells when finished to weigh (without clappers) not less than 45 and not more than 47 cwt., to be good, sound, and tuneable, and be kept so for one year. Among the charges entered in the churchwardens' accounts are 7s. 9d. paid "for waying ye old bells in money and ale"; "1s. spent with Mr. Hawksworth as he went to Sheffield"; and £3 3s. "ye lawyers' bill for drawing ye articles"; the total cost being £122, whilst the "twelve penny lay" (levy?) only realised £120. In these documents and entries Hedderley's name is spelt in three other ways, Heddeley, Eddearley, and Ederly.

Among its bells Chesterfield has a small one, about 18 inches high, called, like others elsewhere, "the Pancake bell," because tolled on Shrove Tuesday, no doubt formerly as a call to confession on that day. It was formerly used as the Curfew bell, and during the time when French prisoners of war were confined at Chesterfield was also rung to summon them to their quarters at nightfall. The new tenor bell weighs nearly a ton and a quarter. There was great competition among the ringers when the new bells were rung. On the first day ((May 22, 1820) the following peals were rung by the societies of ringers mentioned:—A complete peal of 5,147 grandsire caters by Oldham; one of 5,003 grandsire caters, by Sheffield; a complete peal of new treble bob royals, consisting of 5,180 changes, by combined societies of Leeds, Wakefield, and Sheffield Independents. On Tuesday, May 23, a company from Ashton-under-Lyne, and one from Mottram, Cheshire, each rang a complete peal of 5,000 grandsire caters; and the Nottingham Sherwood Youths one of 5,364 grandsire caters. It is related that each party "completed their peal on the first attempt, an achievement never before performed in the annals of ringing."

XIII.—SURVIVALS OF PRE-REFORMATION USAGES.

THE various uses to which church bells are or have been put will form the concluding subject of these chapters. No fewer than sixty such uses are mentioned by some writers. Here I can do no more than select some of the chief. Calls to prayers were naturally the first want supplied. How different this call, by clang of metal in tower and steeple, from the secret message passed anxiously from door to door among the early Christians, when their public devotions, if discovered, might mean the scourge, the prison, or perhaps the martyr's doom. How different, too, afterwards, when persecution ceased, from the trumpets by which Christian worshippers, like the Jews of old, were at first brought together! Or from the primitive custom in monasteries, where monks and nuns were summoned to service by blows from a mallet at the door of each cell, or by one of their number going round and calling Hallelujah! Campanologists, I may note here, insist on precision in describing the three chief bell functions, which are correctly set forth at Durham:—

To call the folks to Church in time,
We chime.
When mirth and joy are on the wing,
We ring.
When from the body parts the soul,
We toll.

Yet, in fact, all three methods are employed at different churches in announcing service. Where only one bell exists there can be but one method. Yet though our Prayer-book treats a single bell as alone essential, this Apostolic simplicity is not to be followed where better conditions can be obtained.

Before the Reformation the canonical hours were kept by much ringing of bells. These hours were: Prime, 6 a.m.; Tierce, mass, 9 a.m.; Sext, noon; Nones, 3 p.m.; Vespers, 6 p.m.; Compline, 9 p.m. Then, in monastic institutions, a bell sounded for Matins and Lauds between midnight and Prime. The Ave Maria or Angelus bell was rung twice daily, at early morn, noon, and eve, so that, as Polydore Vergil says, everyone who heard it may kneel and repeat the Angel's salutation to the Blessed Virgin. When the curfew ceased to be compulsory by law, it was often continued that people might thereby be

interment "above half-an-hour." Canon 15 accordingly recognised this wish, as well as the practical good sense of Bishop Grandison, by directing that after death "there shall be rung no more than one short peal, and one other before burial, and one after burial." Directions in the same spirit were given by Bishop Hooper, A.D. 1551, when he forbade ringing at unseasonable times, though "before services, as well morning as at even," people might be warned "by as many peals or ringings as they think good.

In the twelfth century it was usual to notify the sex of the deceased by two strokes of the bell for a woman, three for a man, before the regular tolling began. These distinct strokes were called "tellers," and are still generally used in announcing death. To-day the number of "tellers" to indicate the sexes varies greatly. In some places the ancient numbers are retained; the more general custom is to sound thrice three tolls for a man, thrice two for a woman, three single tolls for a child. An odd suggestion, probably well-founded, is that the old saying, "Nine tailors make a man," is really a corruption of the nine "tellers" which make known a man's death. Sometimes, though rarely, the age of the deceased is noted by a corresponding number of tolls. On the second bell of Hedon church Mr. Park notes the following dismal inscription:—"Wind them" (i.e., wrap them in the winding-sheet), "and bring them; and I will ring them" (i.e., toll for them). Besides the funeral bell, there was often, in pre-Reformation times, a commemoration ringing, on the anniversary of death, the ringers being paid under bequest or by relatives. Such payments for obituary or "obit" services are frequent in churchwardens' books at Boston, and also at Hedon, where "obit" fees are entered as far back as A.D. 1454. In 1687 the mayor, minister, and churchwardens of Hedon specified the fees to be paid, "when any person shall happen to die for whom there shall be any bells rung." These fees varied from sixpence for poor persons to five shillings, and were applied towards maintaining the bells. "Obit" ringings at the cost of relatives or friends are now fairly represented by the yearly commemorative notices so common in the newspapers.

In his notes upon bells at St. Mary Cray, in Kent, Mr. Stahlschmidt relates a curious belief, which appears to have prevailed among some old ringers. I give it as told to him by the head of the local ringers' guild there. The facts are undoubted:—"One evening when we had stopped our practice, our leader said to the sexton: 'That tenor bell has been sounding so mournful to-night that I'm sure you will have to toll it for a death in a day or two.' The sexton, to my astonishment, agreed, and both men repeated their prophecy with certainty." In fact, five deaths occurred during the following week, and the bell was tolled accordingly. Is this a general or only a local belief among old ringers?

In some places, according to ancient custom, chimes were used instead of death-knells at the funeral of old people, to indicate, perhaps, their happy release from infirmity and suffering. At Scothern, for example, in 1860, an aged Yorkshire woman asked that the bells should be so chimed, which was done. Similarly at Cotes Magna, in 1872, a venerable lady desired that "the beautiful bells which had so often cheered her in life might ring her to rest in her last home." Again, at South Kelsey, in 1848, Ann Johnson, aged 96, also asked that she might be "chimed to church as old people who died were when she was a girl." One of our minor poets, Mr. S. Collinson, in a volume called "Autumn Leaves," composed some verses on this occasion, a few lines from which I venture to quote, so appropriate and reverent is their tone. They are given in full by Mr. North:—

Chime me to church and let no doleful knell
Be tolled from that old steeple grey;
The melody of pealing bells shall swell
Around me on my funeral day.

. . . . . .

The mellow leaves are falling from the trees,
Golden and brown, by soft winds borne:
After life's strife there comes the hope of ease:
Its coming should not make us mourn.

. . . . . .

Chime me to church and let the cheerful peal
Make homely music in the air;
No cause for sorrow; I but gently steal
Away into a dawn more fair.

Chime me to church, to sleep near its grey wall
Lulled by the evening song to rest,
Till summoned by the white-robed angel's call
To the bright morning of the blest.

And so, after "our long day's work," would some of us, like old Ann Johnson, wish ourselves borne to the grave, not indeed to be forgotten by dear ones left behind, but to be remembered by them as one happily delivered from life's storm, and strife, and strain—one of those of whom it is written, "Then are they glad because they are at rest; and so He bringeth them unto the haven where they would be."

In the last chapter, in noticing the Sanctus bell, often fixed outside the church, on the eastern gable of the nave, and rung at the elevation of the Host, I should have mentioned that, in the absence of a fixed bell, acolytes rang small handbells, often richly ornamented. Specimens of early Italian work of this kind are in the Victoria and Albert Museum at South Kensington. The Horniman Museum, at Forest Hill, London, is rich in its store of old bells, and Mr. Quick, the curator, says that these handbells sometimes consisted of a carillon of three or four small bells, hidden within a large one, thus blending their sound. Of the "Sacring" bell, also noticed in my last chapter, I am reminded by another

poetic allusion besides that in Sir Walter Raleigh's little-known lines: —

Her eye was as bright as the merry sunlight,
Where it shines on the dewy grass;
And her voice was as clear as the Sacring bell
That is rung at the Holy Mass.

Among the bell mottoes before recorded, those describing merry wedding peals were not forgotten. But these are other less joyous sides to the picture, as many husbands and wives, times out of mind, have thought or openly declared. To this sad view of the nuptial tie one Thomas Nash gave public expression when, in 1813, he bequeathed £50 a year to the ringers at Bath "on condition of their ringing on the whole peal of bells, with clappers muffled, various solemn and doleful changes on the 14th of May in every year, being the anniversary of my wedding-day; and also on the anniversary of my decease to ring a grand bob-major, and merry, mirthful peals, unmuffled, in joyful commemoration of my happy release from domestic tyranny and wretchedness." Muffled peals, I should explain, are rung with a leather cap covering one-half the clapper, thus rendering its sound alternately clear and depressed.

At Barnoldby-le-Beck and other places, peals used to be rung when the banns were called. These give the couple their "spurring," "spurs," or "sporrings," from the old Danish "sporge," or asking. Another old custom is recorded at Claxby, and elsewhere in Lincolnshire, where the clerk, after the third asking, said "God speed them well!" In one of these parishes the Vicar published his own banns. Thereupon the clerk turned round, with a "God speed you well, sir!" North says that in days when wedding trips were unknown in Lincolnshire villages, it was customary, as at Hogsthorpe, to ring a peal on the morning after a wedding. This was called the bride's peal. At Mumby, Fotherby, Scotter, and Kirkby-cum-Osgodby, the bride and bridegroom, were thus called, rather unfairly, at 7 a.m., or even earlier. It was called "Ringing them up."

I pass now to quite a different usage. In 1547 Royal Injunctions ordered a bell to be rung or knolled a convenient time before the sermon, so that, as was expressed at a much earlier period, in the "Rites of Durham," "all the people of the towne might have warnyng to come and here the word of Gode preched." In a churchwardens' book of 1553 a curious entry illustrates this custom by a payment of "ijd. for rynginge of ye great bell for Master Latimore sarmon," the preacher named being none other than the famous Hugh Latimer. The founders of the English Church, as Southey tells us, did not intend that the sermon should invariably form part of the service. It became so in deference to the Puritans, who absented themselves during the liturgy, which they objected to as having a Romish taint.

Usually the sermon bell was rung during the Litany or after the Nicene Creed; and the early Puritans found this notice very convenient. They were bound, under pains and penalties, to attend service in the parish church; and they satisfied their legal obligation by coming when that part of the service to which they objected had ended. It was not a seemly practice, and must have rudely disturbed the rest of the congregation. The Bishops therefore tried to prevent it, and one of their number (Wren, in 1640), to baffle the dissidents, and make useless the notice they relied on, directed "that the same ringing of bells should be observed at all times, whether there was a sermon or not." During the early part of the 18th century Nonconformists are said in some places to have often gone to church to hear the sermon, after their own service in their chapel or meeting-house.

Some further miscellaneous uses to which church bells were put may here be mentioned. In mediæval days tenants of the Lord of the Manor were thus summoned to go to his mill or his oven, where they were bound to grind their corn or bake their bread. In some parishes a bell was rung, called the Oven bell, to notify that the Manor oven was heated and ready for use. So at St. Albans (A.D. 1260) a bell at the Abbey called all townsmen to full their cloth at the Abbot's mill. As the monks' charge was higher than that asked elsewhere, the townsmen took no notice of the bell, which so angered the Abbot that he composed special prayers in which he asked for Divine help through the intercession of St. Alban; and then the whole brotherhood, "a certain great bell tolling," went with bare feet in procession to the high altar, where their prayers were renewed, with what effect upon the townspeople is not chronicled.

In the old sentence of excommunication pronounced against ecclesiastical offenders "by bell book, and candle," the people were called to the church by a solemn tolling, a sentence was read from the book, the bell ceased, the lighted candle was thrown down and extinguished; and so by these symbols the offender was cut off from the rites of the church, from fellowship with all believers, and must perish everlastingly unless purged of his crime, and truly penitent. As Froude reminds us, excommunication was no light thing when there was only one religious communion, when it was equivalent to outlawry, when such an offender might be imprisoned by the bishop, was cut off from the sacraments, and his friends and relatives were subject to like penalties if they helped him or even spoke to him. Swearing by the bell was a harmless form of oath, as witness mine host of the Tabard in Chaucer: —

Yea, quoth our host, by St. Paule's bell,
Ye say right sooth.

Lastly, I may note how a new incumbent, on induction to his benefice, knocks at the church door,

and, when admitted, places his hand on the lock and tolls the bell, thereby notifying to his parishioners, within and without, that he takes legal possession. In some places the popular belief is that, as many tolls as the bell gives, so many years will the incumbent spend in his new charge. A hymn sung, a procession eastwards up the aisle, and the placing of the incumbent in his proper stall, follow this function. It is an ancient ceremony, for the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records how at a certain abbey, "on the day after the Feast of St. John, A.D. 1131, the monks chose an abbot from among themselves, and brought him into church in procession;" and how "they sang Te Deum Laudamus, rung the bells, and sat him in the abbot's seat."

XV.—SUPERSTITIONS AND LEGENDS ABOUT BELLS.

BELL-RINGING in honour of episcopal visits was an ancient custom, non-observance of which was treated as a grave ecclesiastical offence. Thus when Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury, came to Barnet, in Hertfordshire, on St. Peter's Day, 1423, he "suspended the church and excommunicated the bailiff" because the bells preserved a disrespectful silence. The Rector pleaded that his church being within the jurisdiction of St. Albans Abbey, was exempt from any such custom. This explanation did not satisfy Archbishop Chicheley, and on his complaint the Abbot consented that in future "the reverence of ringing the bells" should be shown to him and his successors "so often as they in their journeys should ride within the jurisdiction. At St. Albans the monks always stoutly defended their peculiar privileges, for when another Primate of All England, Robert de Wynchilse, was on a journey, and invited himself to stay at the Abbey, John, then Abbot, refused him as a guest, as the custom was that no Prelate could claim lodging there without a special invitation. The Archbishop accordingly took lodgings in the town, and, because the bells did not ring in his honour, placed St. Stephen's Church under interdict. Being here also within the Abbot's jurisdiction, the officiating priests appear, as in a modern instance of an ecclesiastical curse, to have felt themselves "not a penny the worse," for "they rang, celebrated, and did all things which they ought," just as usual. It is related that on the morrow, feeling no doubt rather small, and also very angry, the Archbishop, uttering threats, rode indignantly away.

A similar example of episcopal wrath occurred in 1522, at one of Bishop Fisher's visitations, when the churchwardens of Gravesend omitted to ring the bells, for which lack of reverence they were cited and fined. Fox, in his "Acts and Monuments," gives an amusing account of a like incident during a visitation by Bonner. This fiery Prelate had been well entertained at Bishop Stortford, where the church bells rang lustily. As, attended by a numerous suite, he approached Hadham, the next church in his round, no such salute of honour was heard. "What meaneth the knave, the clerk, that he ringeth not? and the parson, that he meeteth me not?" cried the bishop. The nearer he approached the hotter was his fit; the quieter the bells, the unquieter his mood. But when he reached the church, and found no "tall, well-favoured rood erected, as enjoined, he curtailed his small devotions and fell from choler and melancholy to flat madness, swearing and raging, with a hunting oath or two." In vain the poor Rector explained that he was taken by surprise, not having expected his lordship's visit for two hours, and humbly begged him to partake of some refreshment. Bonner was not appeased, and even aimed a blow at the offending priest, who adroitly dodged it, so that it fell upon the astonished ear of a quiet and most respectable bystander, Sir Thomas Jocelyn. Whether the Bishop apologised for hitting the wrong man we are not told, but he left the Rector's dinner untouched, continuing his journey to Ware. Fox gives this narrative with evident enjoyment. It sounds rather highly coloured, as though told "ex relatione"—suppose we say, on the authority of some anonymous correspondent.

Loyal occasions, such as coronations, Royal birthdays, signal victories, and the like, have set most English belfries in motion for many centuries. Very noteworthy is an entry in one parish book of payments for ringing, A.D. 1588, "in rejoysing of our delyveraunce from the Spaynnyerds." Even now a thrill comes over one in reading of this joyous peal, and we feel what our ancestors must have thought of the Armada's signal defeat, and the safety of their religion, their liberty, their Queen, from the cruel,

bigoted Philip and the terrors of the Inquisition. But bells, after all, are only instruments in mortal hands, and these, as we know, often turn and shift and shuffle in sad disregard of right or consistency. Thus we find peals frequently rung in 1680-4, when the Merry Monarch went to Newmarket, and returned; and again in 1685, when James II. was crowned, though the nation loathed him. Then, in the same year, seven shillings were paid "for wringing that the Duke of Mulmone (Monmouth) was taken or fled:" and only one year after, the Revolution was celebrated at a cost of ten shillings, by ringing on Thanksgiving Day, and also "when King William and Queene Mary were proclaymed."

In a former chapter I described how Chesterfield's Vicar very properly stopped the ringing of his church bells to announce the races. Brand, in his "Antiquities," states that he has known church bells rung to celebrate the winning of a "long main" at cock-fighting. At Watford a bell used to be sounded on Sunday morning at the conclusion of service "to give notice to gentlemen's servants to get their masters' carriages ready." When Beau Nash was the despotic Master of Ceremonies at Bath, the Abbey bells were rung to welcome the arrival of any visitors, no matter what their rank or character. For paying this compliment the ringers charged half a guinea. Anstey, in his "New Bath Guide," writes:—

No city, dear mother, this city excels,
In charming sweet sounds, both of fiddles and bells,
I thought like a fool that they only would ring
For a wedding, a judge, or the birth of a king:
But I found 'twas for me that the good-natured people
Rung so hard that I thought they would pull down the steeple.
So I took out my purse, as I hate to be shabby,
And paid all the men when they came from the Abbey.

Mr. R. E. Leader ("Reminiscences of Sheffield") cites from the accounts of the Town Trustees and the Cutlers' Company entries, which show how early in the 18th century the church bells were set a-ringing at the town's expense "on every conceivable occasion," and how "the cutlers promptly took this as a signal to lay aside their aprons and flock to the public-house." In 1749, some attempt was made to check these exeeeses, and it was resolved "that the ringers were to be paid five guineas and no more for ringing on Sundays, 'rejoicing days, and all other usual occasions,' except when they ring by order of the Town Collector, on account of any nobleman or person of distinction coming to the town," herein following the Bath practice. Mr. Leader adds that these virtuous resolutions were "all in vain. Any excuse was good enough for a drinking bout. The ringers were continually receiving extra half-guineas for ringing on 'good news brought.'" Clearly the church bells in Sheffield were made ample use of at this period for secular purposes, not always commendable. The same author notes how the bells were made to rejoice with the town after the alarm caused by the young Pretender and his Highlanders in 1745, ended with Culloden. At the beginning of the 19th century the Town Trustees, by whom, and not by the Church Burgesses, the ringers were paid, began, in Mr. Loader's words, to tire of "the perpetual extras." Since then the Parish Church bells are heard much less often on quasi public occasions; and Gunpowder Plot day, the execution of Charles I., and the Restoration are no longer celebrated.

Many other uses of church bells, past and present, might be cited. Those of Dewsbury were thought famous, even beyond Yorkshire, as giving forth "England's sweetest melody." One of them, popularly known as "Black Tom of Sothill," said to have been an expiatory gift for a murder, used to be tolled on Christmas Eve as at a funeral. This ringing was called "The devil's knell," because on hearing it the Devil fled in terror. Along and near the coast of Kent and Sussex bells were turned to account in quite a different way, for when smugglers were hard pressed, they took their bales or tubs to the belfry, where these were concealed inside the bells by fastening them to the clappers. In case of fire, church bells were jangled, or rung backward, to summon help. Their supposed efficacy to ward off pestilence and tempest has been more than once mentioned. A scientific writer, A.D. 1625, advocated their ringing for the former purpose, and also the discharge of great ordnance, because thereby the air is purified. "Paid for bread and drink for the ringers at night in the thundering," is one of many similar entries in churchwardens' accounts during the 15th and 16th centuries; and a great theologian, A.D. 1286, explained the custom, which was many centuries older than his time, on the ground that "the fiends, hearing the trumpets of the Eternal King, then flee away and cease from raising the storm." Or, in the equally weighty words of Wynkin de Werde (the Golden Legend): "It is said the evil spirytes that ben in the region of ye ayre doubte moche when they here the belles ringen; and this is the cause why the belles ringen when it thondreth, and whan grete tempeste and rages of wether happen, to the ende that the feinds and wycked spirytes should ben abashed and flee, and cease of the movynge of tempeste." Bishop Latimer, in a sermon preached in Lincolnshire, A.D. 1553, ridiculed the belief that holy bells in fearful weather would "drive away the devil." But the late Dr. Gatty thought that the vibration produced in the air by ringing of large bells may possibly affect any clouds hovering over them which happen to be charged with electric matter. It is true that in the year 1718, during a violent tempest in Brittany, 24 churches were struck by lightning, these only being so struck in which the bells were being rung. This would seem at first sight conclusive testimony against the virtues of bells in dispelling storms; but the

reminded to say a Hail Mary at sundown. In every parish, it would appear, the Angelus was thus sounded thrice, and to secure such service one Oxfordshire benefactor, in 1512, left money so that "the Avees bell should toll at sex of the clok in the mornyng, at xij. of the clok at noone, and at foure of the clok at afternoone." The Aves were repeated by devout hearers between the tolling.

Among the "Injunctions" of Henry VIII., issued in 1538, is the following:—"That the knolling of the Aves after service and certain other times, which hath been brought in and begun by the pretence of the Bishop of Rome's pardon, henceforth be left and omitted, lest the people do hereafter trust to have pardon for the saying of their Aves between the said knolling, as they have done in times past." Accordingly, in 1538, a Protestant Grand Jury at Canterbury "presented" the parson of St. Peter's Church there for "tolling the Aves bell in the said church after the evening song done." Yet—a curious instance of how old customs cling—the Angelus bell is, or was until lately, still rung, generally at 6 a.m., and sometimes also at 6 p.m., at Gedney, Bourne, Crowle, Epworth, Market Rasen, Sleaford, Belton, Horncastle, and Lincoln. In 1830 the sexton's duty at All Saints', Silkstone, was to ring a bell at 5 a.m. and 8 p.m., evidently a survival of two of the ancient Aves. For this service he received 13s. 4d. yearly, and the same scant dole for ringing on Sundays and holidays. Where the practice continues the bell seems recognised more or less as a morning call to work, the ancient evening Angelus being similarly taken to mean, informally, a time for leaving off work.

The old customs still prevails in other places throughout the realm. Thus, at Canterbury, spite of the "presentment" just mentioned, "Bell Harry" not only calls daily to matins and evensong for the cathedral service, but is also rung daily at 5.45 a.m. in summer and an hour later in winter, and at 8 p.m. Mr. Stahlschmidt, a well-known expert, in his "Bells of Kent," thinks these daily ringings here again are undoubted survivals of the ancient morning and evening "Ave" bells, the latter being also known as the curfew. Even a more complete survival of the ancient Ave bells existed in Sheffield until recently, for Mr. R. E. Leader states that down to the time of Vicar Sutton, a single bell was rung daily at the Parish Church at 6 a.m., again at noon, and a curfew bell at 8 p.m., with an additional bell at 7 a.m. on the morning of Sundays and saints' days. The Vicar is said to have stopped this ringing during the illness of Mrs. Sutton, but he may have had other reasons. Sheffield is one of the last places in which one would expect to find the ringing of the Aves, this interesting relic of the mediæval church, discouraged if not forbidden at the Reformation, yet continued until almost our own day. Dr. Sutton was Vicar of Sheffield from 1805 until his death, aged 74, in the year 1851. As Mr. Charles Hadfield has informed us, the Angelus bell, though discontinued at the Parish Church, is still heard in Sheffield, having rung the Aves at St. Marie's thrice daily, morning, noon, and eve, since 1866.

In pre-Reformation times, matins were said on Sundays in all parish churches before breakfast as a preparation for the eight o'clock mass. Dr. Rock ("Church of our Fathers") quotes Sir Thomas More in defence of this early service:—"Some of us laye men thinke it a payne ones a weeke to ryse so soon fro sleepe, and some to tarye so longe fasting, as on the Sonday to com and heare out theyr matins." When the "new sarvis," as the Book of Common Prayer was termed, came into use under Edward VI., the seven o'clock matins on Sundays, followed by the eight o'clock mass, of course ceased. Yet in many places the church bells are still rung as of old, though for well nigh 350 years the services for which they rang have ended. In Sheffield the two Sunday ringings, as at other places, were merged into one. Mr. North mentions various Lincolnshire parishes where either one or two bells are thus rung early on Sunday mornings, between seven and nine. Among them are Market Deeping, Market Rasen, Owston, Spalding, Croyland, Belton, Haxey, Barrow-on-Humber, and Morton-by-Gainsborough; and he cites examples as a curious proof of a custom continued three or four centuries after it has ceased to have any real meaning, and when now "few people ever think of" or inquire into its origin.

I have been favoured by a ringer in one of the old belfries just mentioned with the "Ancient Order of Bell-ringing" still existing at Haxey, where, it may be remembered, there are pre-Reformation bells. It is an interesting record, deserving preservation if only because it illustrates how tenacious custom is, in keeping alive other old usages now passed out of mind, besides that under notice:—

Ancient Order of Bell-ringing at Haxey Church.—Sundays: 7 o'clock a.m., 1st bell; 8 o'clock a.m., 2nd bell. Services (morning): 9.40 a.m. (evening), 5.10 p.m. January 5th, Old Xmas Eve, 7 o'clock p.m. January 6th, 2 o'clock p.m. Good Friday: Chimes 40 minutes before service. May 29th, 7 o'clock p.m., 6d. per ringer allowed. July 5th, Midsummer Eve, 7 o'clock p.m., 1s. per ringer allowed. July 6th, 5 o'clock a.m., except when it falls on Sunday, then 7 o'clock a.m. Curfew bell, 2nd Bell. First Monday after October 11th (called 7 o'clock Evening Bell) rung till Shrove Tuesday, when the Tenor Bell is rung at 11 o'clock a.m. Practice Nights for ringing, at 7 o'clock, the First Wednesday after Curfew Bell starts, till Ash Wednesday. The other 6 nights in Lent are extra. Nov. 5th, at 7 o'clock p.m., 6d. per ringer allowed. December 24th, Xmas Eve, at 7 o'clock p.m., 1s. per ringer allowed. December 25th, Xmas Day, 7 o'clock a.m., and afterwards 40 minutes before service. December 31st, New Year's Eve, at 7 o'clock p.m. till 9 o'clock, then from 10 to 12.30. Jan. 1st, New Year's Day, at 7 o'clock a.m.; then again the Bells shall be rung down at 9.45 a.m. Then the Ringers go their usual round for a New Year's Gifting.

The 7 and 8 a.m. Sunday bell is, as elsewhere, a survival of the call to mass and subsequent service. The observance of old Christmas and old Midsummer Eve and Day is also a remarkable remnant of old customs. Our modern Lady Day, it will be seen, is ignored. The Shrove Tuesday bell, at 11 a.m., when curfew ends, is called, as in other parishes, the Pancake bell, housewives being thereby warned to prepare their pancakes for the noonday dinner. It is, doubtless, the old shriving bell, a call to confession. On New Year's Day, it will be seen, the custom here is for the ringers to make a collection through the parish.

The bell which sounded the Aves was often called Gabriel, after the Angel of the Annunciation. One of the new bells at St. Marie's, Sheffield, bears this name, though not used for the Aves, and is inscribed with the monks' rhyme already noted: "Missi de Cœlis, Habeo nomen Gabrielis." The same name, with a like inscription, is found on many old bells in Lincolnshire and adjoining counties; for example, at Althorpe, Branston, and Holton-le-Clay. About the Ave Maria bell there is the following note in Sir T. Browne's "Religio Medici," quoted by the late Dr. Gatty:—"A church bell that tolls every day at six and twelve of the clock, at the hearing whereof every one in whatever place soever, either of house or street, betakes himself to his prayer, which is commonly directed to the Virgin." The quaint old writer adds:—"I could never hear the Ave Maria bell without an elevation, nor think it a sufficient warrant because they erred in one circumstance for me to err in all, that is in silence and dumb contempt. Whilst, therefore, they direct their devotions to her, I offer mine to God, and rectify the error of their prayers by rightly ordering mine own."

The curfew (couvre feu), rung of old at eight p.m. as a warning that fire and candle must be extinguished, dates from King Alfred's reign, and was used in Normandy, before its institution here by William the Conqueror. In those days, thatch and wood were used both for town and country houses. Precautions were therefore essential, so rapidly did flames spread, often sweeping away whole villages. The law was abolished by Henry I. in 1100, but the use of this bell was retained for religious purposes, and, as we have seen, it came to be called the evening "Angelus." Curfew ringing still prevails all over England, including about twenty Lincolnshire parishes, though not always at the same hour. Its survival is another instance of the tenacity with which Englishmen cling to practices once established. For centuries it has continued to toll "the knell of parting day," and as an old writer has said of it, "few who have been accustomed to its sound would not feel, were it hushed, that a soothing sentiment had been taken out of their lives." One very prosaic critic, not denying the existence of this common feeling, fastens upon Gray's line and says "the knell of parting day" is perhaps near enough for poetry, but at eight p.m. in the winter months the sun must have set three or four hours before. Milton's fine verse, well described as "sonorous and musical as the bell itself," is at all events not open to the same objection:—

> On a plat of rising ground,
> I hear the far-off curfew sound,
> Over some wide-watered shore,
> Swinging slow, with solemn roar.

Temperance reformers will hear with interest that the curfew bell once had another use. For a long period it was a signal in law that all tippling must cease. In 1291, no wine was to be drawn after it had rung, and all taverns and ale-houses closed. At Leicester A.D. 1583 a stringent by-law provided "that the keeper of any ale-house that suffers any townsman to remain in his house after the curfew bell hath rung (without lawful cause) shall forfeit 12d. to be paid presently, or else to remaining in ward that night." To give greater liberty to people in large towns, curfew was often rung there at 9 p.m. In 1469, Bow bell in London rung at nine, was a signal for closing of shops of all kinds.

Some miscellaneous uses of bells, ancient and modern, may now be recorded. The Saunce or Sanctc bell, which still hangs in a bell-cote outside a few of our churches, was so named from being always rung at the words, "Sancte, sancte, sancte, Deus Sabaoth" (Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth), as the priest elevated the Host; so that the congregation might kneel and offer prayer. Sir Walter Raleigh, in a little poem, "Now, what is Love?" says:—

> It is, perhaps, the sauncing bell,
> That tolls all into heaven or hell.

Sometimes a large bell was ordered to be sounded at the elevation, so that, as expressed by the Primate in 1281, "the people who have not leisure daily to be present at mass, may, wherever they are, in houses or fields, bow their knees." This injunction recalls Millet's beautiful picture of the peasants stopping their ploughing and reverently bending as they hear the distant bell. The sacring bell, a small hand-bell, was used during mass to warn the people that the elevation was about to take place. This was sometimes called the Agnus-bell, because rung just before the singing of the Agnus. The small sacring bell found behind the plaster at Bottesford, near Brigg, when the church was restored in 1870, has already been mentioned. This hand-bell, which bears a fleur-de-lis stamp, is now possessed by the Society of Antiquaries. Another sacring-bell from Pickering Church, Yorkshire, is impressed with the crucifixion, and was formerly used by the town crier. Cranmer and Ridley, in 1549-50, forbade the use of the sacring bell to "counterfeit the Popish mass."

Among other occasions, small ecclesiastical bells before the Reformation were used in processions by

the crier and sacristan, who were paid, as at Boston, for making the circuit of the town and exhorting people to "pray for the souls" of persons lately dead and "to say an Ave and Pater Noster for charity's sake"; also when the Eucharist was borne to the house of the sick or dying, so that passers-by might be warned and pay it due reverence. This was called the "housselling" bell. The corse, or lych, bell, was rung before the coffin on its way to the church and tomb. Then there was the priest's bell, or ting-tang, now rung after the chimes, to show that the service is about to begin, but formerly described as "one lyttle belle to call for ye prieste, clerke, or sextone." The old Sanctus bell seems often now so used. In some parishes a bell, rung at the close of the morning service, is known as the pudding or potato bell, which warns the cook that service is over, dinner may be got ready, and potatoes put in the pot for boiling. North thinks this bell is the survival of the Aves, mentioned in the Injunction of 1538 as being sounded after the service, and then ordered to be discontinued. The so-called "pancake bell" on Shrove Tuesday is also now assumed to be a signal to the cook, though no doubt, as already mentioned, a survival of the summons to go to confession on a day when everybody was bound so to do. Some antiquarians ascribe Pancake Day to the pagan Saxons who then offered cakes to their sun-god.

Mr. Park ("Churches of Holderness," 1898) says, on the authority of an old inhabitant at the well-known seaside resort of Flamborough, that when there was no belfry the people were called to worship on Sundays by a perambulating bellman. This curious method also prevailed at Mevagissey, in Cornwall, though not for the same reason, the hand-bell there being rung through the streets for morning service before the church bell began. Still more singular is a story told by the old clerk of Messingham, Lincolnshire, that the call to church there used to be by three men's voices. A traveller remarked that it was a pity so fine a church should have no bells, and promised to pay for three hand-bells provided they were made by the three callers. These men were a tinker, a carpenter, and a shoemaker, and each made a bell which said respectively "Ting," "tong," and "ploff," being made of tin, wood, and leather. At Barrow-on-Humber the "harvest bell" used to be rung at break of day and sunset, and a "gleaning bell" to show when gleaners might begin, so that women, with old and feeble folk, might have a fair start with the young and active. At Louth there used to be rung in the early morn what was known as "the getting-up bell." Many traditions exist of persons benighted on the moors or wolds and guided on their way by hearing the distant church bells. Such traditions are found at Sheffield, Louth, Barton-on-Humber, Market Rasen, and other places. It is rarely possible to trace the bequests said to have been left by such persons for similar services. When the country was unenclosed and roads were ill-marked, and when, too, jovial farmers were not too well able to find their way, a market bell was sometimes rung during the winter months, as in Kirton-in-Lindsey, to guide people home who had attended the market at Gainsborough or Brigg. At Burgh there is distinct record of land left by a sea-captain to provide a silken rope for the tenor bell. Having lost his reckoning off the coast on a dark night, he was warned of his danger by the sound of the curfew. The land now yields a rental of £4, which is paid to the ringers' fund.

XIV.—DEATH KNELLS AND WEDDING BELLS.

THE custom of notifying by bell the approach of death is almost as ancient as the use of bells for calling to service. In the year 680 we read that the nuns of Hackness were thus "wont to be aroused or assembled to prayers when any one of them was being called forth from this world." According to an old superstition, the church bell was rung at the hour of expected death, to put to flight the demons who lay in wait to afflict the troubled soul, and who even sometimes did battle with good and guardian angels for its possession as it departed from the body. Very solemn must have been the sound of this Passing bell, telling all hearers that death was near, so that they might pray for the dying person. It was rung at all hours of the night, as well as by day; and North quotes a quaint illustration from the churchwardens' accounts at Peterborough in 1572:—"Item viijs. to ye sextone, beyng a pore old man and rysyng oft in yet nyghte to tolle ye belle for sicke persones, ye wether beynge grevous, and in consyderacyon of his good servis, towards a gowne to kepe hym warme."

The use of this bell continued after the Reformation. Canon 15 directs that "when any is passing out of this life, a bell shall be tolled, and the Minister shall not then be slack to do his last duty." Bishop Hooper, in his injunctions of 1551, while forbidding "knells of forthfares rung for the death of any man," adds:—"But in case they that be sick and in danger, or any of their friends, demand to have the bell toll while the sick is in extremes to admonish people of their danger, and by that means to solicitate the hearers to pray for the sick person, they may use it." In a Royal proclamation of 1559, Queen Elizabeth even enjoins its use. So did Archbishop Grindal in 1570, "to move the people to pray for the sick." Much later, Bishop Cosin, in 1662, alludes approvingly to the old custom upon the same ground, "that neighbours may be warned to recommend the dying person to the grace and favour of God." The pathetic story of Lady Katherine Grey, sister of Lady Jane Grey, who died a State prisoner in 1567, has often been related. On her death-bed, Sir Owen Opton, Constable of the Tower, whispered to one of the attendants, "Were it not best to send to the church that the bell may be rung?" The poor lady caught his words, and answered feebly, "Good Sir Owen, let it be so!"

Even the Puritans followed the old practice, for when John Rainolds, one of their advocates at the Hampton Court Conference, was on his death-bed, as Fuller relates, "he expressed by signes that he would have the passing bell tole for him." Nelson also, in his Fasts and Festivals, written in 1732 ("Meditations for the Holy Time of Lent"), says, as the death-bed test of a good Christian, that, should his senses hold out so long, he can "hear even his Passing-bell without disturbance." "Jesus be our speede" was the appropriate motto generally placed upon the bell so used, and besides the churches already mentioned, this motto is found at Burton Joyce, Notts, 1581; in the Lincolnshire parishes of Ulceby, 1583, Fleet, 1598, Burgh, 1663; and in Yorkshire at St. John's, York, 1633, Hunmanby, 1619, Brotherton, 1632, Ackworth, 1662, Bedale, 1664, Spennithorne, 1681, and Hemsworth, 1726. Regular fees were charged for the ringing, as at Hedon, in Holderness, and at Barton-upon-Humber, in 1713, when the Clerk received "for every passing bell fourpence, and for every soul bell fourpence." The latter was the knell rung after death. This practice gradually superseded the passing bell, which Wheatley speaks of as being disused about 1755.

Death-knells, as we are told in "the Book of Ceremonies" (1539), "are ordained to give knowledge of our Christian brothers or sisters departed this world, that both we may call to remembrance our own mortality and also be moved with charity to pray for them so departed." They were also referred to in Articles issued by the Bishops after the Reformation as a knell rung "presently after departure that notice may be taken by all to give God thanks for that person's deliverance out of a vale of misery." The ancient custom of sounding bells at funerals seems to have been carried to excess in early times. In 1339 Bishop Grandison, of Exeter, stopped them because "they do no good to the departed, are an annoyance to the living, and injurious to the fabrick and the bells." Apparently the same abuse existed more than two centuries afterwards, for the Puritans in 1562 desired that no peal after death should be "above the space of an hour," or at

defence offered for their default here is, that had they been rung before the clouds united and condensed these would have been dissipated without any electric discharge.

These oft-recurring, old-world superstitions, legends, traditions, have a strange fascination, and somehow do not seem out of place in the story of our church bells. That these, on any stirring event, would ring faintly of themselves, in joy, grief, protest, or warning, was in mediæval times a widespread belief. For example, when Archbishop A'Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral, the bells there are said to have tolled of their own accord. At the death of Grostete, the great Bishop of Lincoln, in 1254, bell music was heard in the air, in distant parishes as well as in the county capital. Again, when Hugh, the boy-martyr there, was buried, the old ballad declares:—

A' the bells o' merrie Lincoln
Without men's hands were rung;
And a' the books of merrie Lincoln
Were read without men's tongue;
And ne'er was such a burial
Sin' Adam's days begun.

That bells resented being taken from the church in which they had been consecrated, was another vulgar but pretty conceit. If a thief made off with a small Sanctus bell, it would take the first opportunity of returning to its home, ringing all the way. There was an Irish bell, which a Wicklow chieftain had no right to, and he was obliged to tie it with a cord to prevent it, like a stray dog, from finding its way back to a church in Meath. Of another character are the stories of bells cracking upon the death of benefactors or other great men. At the Duke of Wellington's death the bells of Trim were tolled. The Duke had represented Trim in Parliament, and spent some of his early years there. The tenor bell was one of the finest and sweetest in Ireland. It broke on this occasion, and was found to have been cast in 1769, the year when the Duke was born. Here is cause and effect for you!

Another poetic fancy detects the sound of invisible bells from churches which have been swallowed up by sea or land. Holderness, in the East Riding, once possessed considerable towns and villages, noted in history, but now no more. Ravensor, Ravenserodd, Penisthorp, Sunthorp, Tharlesthorp, Frismersk, Orwithfleet, were once considerable places, situated near what is now Spurn Point, more than one sending members to Parliament, and furnishing good store of ships and men for the King's service in time of war. It is pathetic to read of their gradual destruction, to the lasting injury of the great Abbey of Meaux, which held large grants of land in Holderness. How the church bells fared, with the graveyards and the churches themselves, is related in piteous terms early during the 14th century by the chroniclers of Meaux. I take a translation of one such passage from Mr. J. R. Boyle's interesting work, "The Lost Towns of the Humber":—

When the inundations of the sea and of the Humber had destroyed to the foundations the chapel of Ravenserre Odd, built in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that the corpses and bones of the dead there buried horribly appeared, and the same inundations daily threatened the destruction of the said towne, sacrilegious persons carried off and alienated certain ornaments of the said chapel, without our due consent, and disposed of them for their own pleasure; except a few ornaments, images, books, and a bell, which we sold to the mother church of Easyngton, and two smaller bells to the church of Aldeburgh. But that town of Ravenserre Odd was an exceedingly famous borough, devoted to merchandize, as well as many fisheries, most abundantly furnished with ships and burgesses amongst the boroughs of that sea-coast. But yet, with all inferior places, and chiefly by wrong-doing on the sea, by its wicked works and piracies, it provoked the wrath of God against itself beyond measure. Wherefore, within the few following years, the said town, by those inundations of the sea and of the Humber, was destroyed to its foundations, so that nothing of value remained.

Whether the church bells were saved in all these places, or sometimes sank with the structure, does not appear. Anyhow, tradition has it that old fishermen along this east coast, and further south off Southwold, where three churches were swept away, used to hear the faint sound of bells on Sabbaths and Saints' days. In Notts, a whole village, Raleigh, is said to have been engulfed by an earthquake; and villagers of old used to go to the old site on Christmas morning and listen to the distant mysterious chimes from their lost church. A similar tradition lingered long at a village near Kirkby Lonsdale, where everyone on Sunday morning might hear the ringing if he put his ear to the ground. In Neil Munro's Highland story, "John Splendid," old Argyllshire folk, he tells us, believe that, on the eve of St. Patrick, bells may be heard near the site of an ancient church in a forest there—"sweet, soft, dreamy bells, muffled in a mist of years; bells whose sounds have come, as one might fancy, at their stated interval, after pealing in a wave about God's universe from star to star, back to the place of their first chiming." Similar traditions exist abroad. Uhland, the German poet, enshrines one of them (I take Lord Lindsay's translation):—

Oft in the forest far one hears
A passing sound of distant bells;
Nor legends old, nor human wit,
Can tell us whence the music swells.
From the lost church, 'tis thought that soft,
Faint ringing cometh on the wind.
Once, many pilgrims trod the path,
But no one now the way may find.

Here is an old-world Cornish legend, with the same ending, related by Wilkie Collins, in his "Rambles beyond Railways." In ancient times the people of Forrabury were sorely vexed because their church had no bells, and so was called "the silent

tower," while their neighbours at Tintagel possessed the famous peal which had rung at King Arthur's funeral. Much money was, therefore, collected, bells of large size and fine tone were ordered, and in due time the ship conveying them neared the harbour. Just then Tintagel's bells were faintly heard across the water, ringing for evensong. Thereupon the pilot reverently took off his hat, crossed himself, and thanked God for their prosperous voyage. But the captain impiously protested that to his skill alone the ship's safe arrival was due; and when the pilot protested, tried with the crew to drown his voice with oaths and blasphemy. At this moment, as if by Heaven's judgment, the clouds gathered, a furious gale arose, and the ship was overwhelmed by an immense sea, higher than any man had ever beheld, the pilot alone being saved. As they sank with the ship, the bells tolled a muffled death-peal; and on stormy days their ghostly knell is still heard above the fiercest roaring of wind and sea.

"From the nature of the associations connected with them," so a Quarterly Reviewer wrote half a century ago, "as well as from their inherent charm, it is no wonder that bells should have exerted an influence on the mind in every age and clime." I have already given as an instance our unemotional Queen Elizabeth, who used to stop, as she returned from visiting Lord Burleigh, at Hatfield, to hear and commend the melodious bells at St. Leonard's, Shoreditch. Even Napoleon, ruthless, cruel, unscrupulous, unsympathetic, as we Englishmen picture him, was stirred by the same sounds. "When we were at Malmaison," says his biographer, Bourrienne, "how often has the booming of the village bell broken off the most interesting conversations! He stopped, lest our talk might cause the loss of a single vibration of the tones which moved him. Their influence, indeed, was so powerful that his voice trembled with emotion, while he said, 'That recalls to me the first years I passed at Brienne.'" And as I quote the master of many legions, may I also ask indulgence for a passage from another Frenchman, a master of lurid description, Victor Hugo, taken from his "Bell Ringer of Notre Dame":—

"The whole tower shook; beams, leads, broad stones, all rumbled together, from the piles of the foundation to the trefoils at the top. Then Quasimodo's rapture knew no bounds; he came and went; he trembled and shook from head to foot with the tower. The bell, let loose, and frantic with liberty, turned its jaws of bronze to either wall of the tower in turn—jaws from which issued that whirlwind whose roar men heard for four leagues around. Quasimodo placed himself between those gaping jaws; he rose and fell with the swaying of the bell, inhaled its tremendous breath, gazed now at the abyss swarming with people like ants, two hundred feet below him, and now at the huge copper clapper which from second to second bellowed in his ear. That was the only speech which he could hear, the only sound that broke the universal silence reigning around him. He basked in it as a bird in the sunshine. All at once the frenzy of the bell seized him; his look became strange; he waited for the passing of the bell as a spider lies in wait for a fly, and flung himself headlong upon it. Then, suspended above the gulf, launched upon the tremendous vibration of the bell, he grasped the brazen monster by its ears, clasped it with his knees, spurred it with his heels, doubling the fury of the peal with the whole force and weight of his body. As the tower shook, he shouted and gnashed his teeth, his red hair stood erect, his chest laboured like a blacksmith's bellows, his eye flashed fire, the monstrous steed neighed and panted under him; and then the big bell of Notre Dame and Quasimodo ceased to exist; they became a dream, a whirlwind, a tempest; vertigo astride of uproar, a spirit clinging to a winged crupper; a strange centaur, half-man, half-bell; a horrid Astolpho, borne aloft by a hippogriff of living bronze."

And now my task ends. I have perhaps trespassed too much upon my readers' time, and if so, I apologise. But church bells have not ceased, and I trust will never cease, to touch a sympathetic chord in many breasts. Their hallowed music pleases equally, whether we rejoice with our fellows, or hear them when alone. They revive memories, happy and mournful, of old homes, old friends, partings, losses, great pleasures, great griefs. They give forth a music which, in Southey's words, "though it falls upon many an unheeding ear, never fails to find some hearts which it exhilarates and some which it softens." I have acknowledged my indebtedness to many earnest labourers in the same field, whose names I have gratefully mentioned. My own reward will be abundant if I have in any way created or increased an interest in our belfries and bells, and a regard for them not confined to churchgoers alone. People of all creeds, or of none, must, I think, be touched by the part which bells play in our religious and social life, by the recollections they suggest, and the finer impulses they inspire as we hear in them by turns—

> A voice divinely sweet; a voice no less
> Divinely sad.

FINIS.

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